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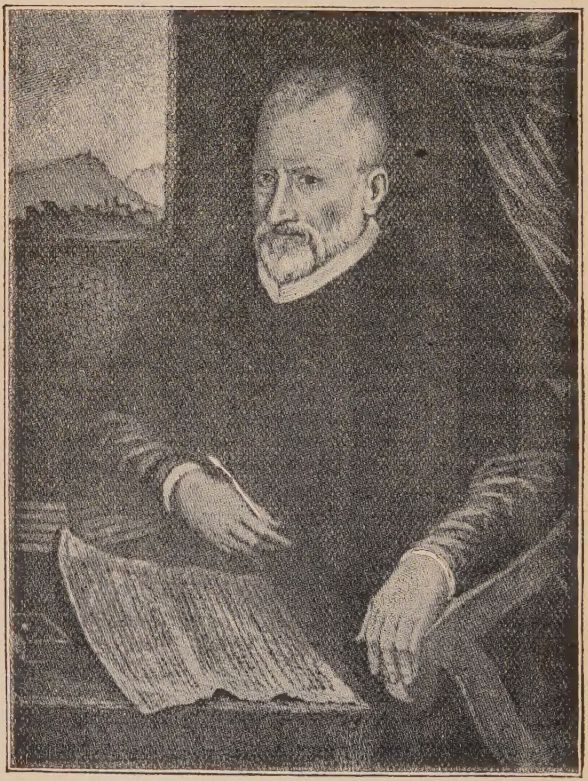

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina.*

(1526-1594.)

PALESTRINA, which by the name of Praeneste is familiar to readers of Horace and Virgil, is a town pleasantly situated at the foot of the Sabine mountains, distant some twenty three miles from Rome. It has a most interesting history, being famed both in heathen and Christian times. More ancient than Rome, it was the chief arsenal in the civil wars between Marius and Sulla, the latter of whom destroyed it after a prolonged siege (B.C. 81), but rebuilt it on a scale of great magnificence, and erected in it a sumptuous Temple of Fortune, the ruins of which are yet to be seen. It then became a favourite summer resort for the more wealthy citizens of Rome, who found in its meadows a cool retreat from the heat of the city.† The ancient town was situated on a more lofty eminence among the surrounding hills than

* The chief materials for this sketch have been: 'Memorie storico-critiche della vita e delle opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, etc.,' compilate da Guiseppe Baini. 2 vols. Roma. 1828. Also the 'Caecilien Kalender' and 'Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch,' (especially those for 1879, 1882, 1886, 1892, and 1894) edited by Dr. F. X. Haberl (Pustet, Ratisbon), 'Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina und die Gesammtausgabe seiner Werke,' by Paul Waldersee (Breitkopf and Härtel, Leipzig), and a most able article by M. Camille Bellaigue in the 'Revue des deux Mondes,' October, 1894. Other works consulted are mentioned in foot-notes. The forthcoming Life of Palestrina by Dr. Haberl promises to be the standard work on the subject.

† Horace speaks of it as "frigidum" (Carm. iii, 4, 22), and says it was there he read the Iliad (Ep. ii. i). Juvenal, too, calls it "icy" (gelida), Sat. iii. 190.

the present one, and the view from its citadel has well been termed "the most historical panorama imaginable."* In the middle ages, Palestrina† was the object of much conflict between the Colonna family and the Popes—conflicts which resulted in the destruction of the city in 1436. No place can show specimens of so many different styles of architecture, and the excavations there have been both extensive and fruitful.

The town is now but little visited, and its chief resource of renown is that it is the birthplace of Giovanni Pierluigi, who first saw the light in 1526.‡ His parents, Sante Pierluigi (died 1559), and Maria Ghismondi, were well-to-do people, possessing a house and small farm at Palestrina and a few houses in Rome. The house in which Giovanni was born is still to be seen and over its doorway there is an inscription to that effect.§ But little is known of his early days. The story of his singing in the streets of Rome for alms is most certainly a myth. We know, however, that from his early years Gianetto, for by this name he was commonly called, evinced great aptitude and love for music, and it is probable that, on the great feasts of the Church, he would journey to Rome to witness the functions and hear the music in the great Basilicas.

About the year 1540, he went to live in Rome, and there received his first musical education from Gaudio

* *Days near Rome*, by Augustus Hare.

† The modern name is found in documents as early as A.D. 873.

‡ There has been much discussion as to the date of Palestrina's birth—1514, 1526, 1524, 1528 having all in turn been given. In 1885, however, the archives of the city and cathedral chapter of Palestrina were opened to Dr. Haberl, who gives it as the result of his investigations, that 1526 is the correct date. [See Canon Proske's Preface to *Musica Divina*, vol. i., Pustet, Ratisbon.] The public registers of Palestrina were destroyed by Alva in 1557, and hence the confusion arose.

§ It runs as follows: "Nel fabricato interno di questa casa nacque ed abitò Giovanni Pierluigi, Principe della Musica." (Quoted by Cascioli, *Life and Works of Palestrina;* Rome, 1894.)

Mell, a Netherlander. * The Roman school of music, as Naumann shows, † had strictly speaking never ceased to exist since its permanent establishment by St. Gregory the Great. Its position as a school was always admitted, and its influence at all times had been great, since the Popes had for years invited the best musicians from all parts to Rome. At the time of which we write, however, the Netherlanders held the lead in music. Their wonderful industry had developed this art with extraordinary rapidity, and, though much of their writing is of the nature of "musical conundrums," "dry as dust," "mere barren cleverness," and devoid of all melody, with no power to move the heart, still there is much of a most devotional and moving character. The great masters of this school, such as Dufay, Josquin des Près, and Arcadelt, had all held important musical positions in Rome, and it is therefore no matter for surprise that the earlier works of Palestrina should have strong indications of their influence. ‡

The progress of Giovanni was most rapid, and soon attracted attention. Hence in 1544, after some four years in Rome, he was appointed organist of the Cathedral in his native town. The document relating to his appointment is still extant, and bears date October, 1544. § Palestrina, though but eighteen years of age, was to enjoy the income of a canon of the Cathedral, and in return was to play the

* Baini has confused Gaudio Mell with Claude Goudimel, who became a Calvinist, and is supposed to have been a victim of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572. Antimo Liberati, who wrote in 1684, is our authority for the true name. (See Preface to *Musica Divina*, vol. i.)

† *History of Music*, vol. ii.

‡ Baini is harsh, however, when he glories in Palestrina's freeing himself in his later works from what he terms "Fiammingo squalore."

§ It is given *in extenso* by Haberl, *Nach Palestrina wegen Palestrina* (Cæcilien Kalender, 1879, page 11). It is well to remark that Schelle deduces from this appointment the fact that Palestrina must have been born considerably before 1526, as it was not customary to appoint so young a man to such a post. He favours the date 1514.

organ on feast days, to take part daily in the singing of Mass, Vespers, and Compline, and to give the canons and choir-boys lessons in singing.

In June 1547, Palestrina married the daughter of a well-to-do citizen of his native town, by name Lucretia de Goris. Though his appointment above referred to was for life, Palestrina held it only for seven years, being promoted by Pope Julius III.—in 1551, to the post of musical instructor in the *Capella Giulia* of the Vatican, with the title of *Magister Capellæ*, receiving a salary of six scudi a month, and a house. This change will not surprise us when we remember that, Julius III.—Giovanni del Monte,—had been Cardinal-Bishop of Palestrina till his election to the Papal throne in 1550. He had doubtless learnt the merits of Giovanni during his seven years' sojourn in Palestrina, and naturally was anxious to retain him, as well as to do him a kindness, by bringing him to Rome. In 1551, then, Giovanni came to Rome, never more to leave it. It was not long before he came under the influence of St. Philip Neri, the Apostle of Rome, who won his heart wholly to God, and induced him to abandon all secular writing and devote his great talents to the service of the Church. Of their friendship and intimacy we shall have more to say in the sequel.

In 1554, Palestrina published his "Opus 1.," a volume of Masses, dedicated to Julius III., who in gratitude offered him a place among the twenty-four collegiate singers of his private chapel, assigning the post thus vacated at the *Capella Giulia* to Giovanni Animuccia.* Being a married man, Palestrina had strictly no right to a place in this choir, and some opposition to his appointment was raised by the other singers. But the Pope carried his point, and on January 13th, 1555, Palestrina was enrolled as a member of the Papal Choir.

* Giovanni Animuccia, an intimate friend of St. Philip Neri, was a fellow-pupil of Palestrina. He was a musician of no ordinary merit, and a man of most holy life. He wrote much for the Oratory in Rome, and died in 1571, in St. Philip's arms. Not even Palestrina, it is said, could "oust him from his nest."

Julius III. died in March of the same year, and Marcellus II., who succeeded, reigning for only twenty-three days, Paul IV. ascended the Chair of St. Peter. He was a stern reformer, as indeed the state of the Church and of the world generally necessitated; and one of his first acts was to free his choir, which according to rule should have been composed of priests and clerics, of all married singers. Palestrina and two other singers* thus lost their posts, and, though some small compensation was made to them, he felt the blow severely. His means were small and he had a wife and four children to support. Doubtless he wished he had never left the cathedral of his native town. Indeed the strain of his misfortunes told so severely, upon him as to make him seriously ill. On his recovery, he was made, in October of the same year, *Maestro della Capella* at the Church of St. John Lateran, with, however, a most meagre salary. This post he held for six years—years of hard, up-hill work—during which he wrote his Lamentations and *Improperia*. The *Improperia* are among the most beautiful of his compositions. Mendelssohn, after hearing them but once, speaks thus of them in his Letters:† "Methinks they are one of Palestrina's most beautiful works. One chord melts so softly into the other . . . . I can well understand that they should have made a deep impression upon Goethe, for really they are almost the most perfect thing in music." And Sir George Grove says:‡ "In depth of feeling, true pathos, and perfect adaptation of the music to the sense of the words, these compositions of Palestrina have never been surpassed." They were first performed at St. John Lateran's, on Good Friday, 1560. The Lamentations, too, soon attracted attention, and Paul IV. added them to the music of the Apostolic Chapel.§

* Domenico Ferrabosco and Leonardo Bari.

† Quoted by Waldersee, *op. cit.* p. 97.

‡ Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, article "Improperia."

§ By the Apostolic Chapel (*Capella Apostolica*) was originally

In 1561, Palestrina was appointed to a like post at the Church of St. Mary Major's, with a salary of sixteen scudi a month. The ten years he spent here are at once the most eventful and fruitful of his life, and we must devote considerable space to a study of them.—The Council of Trent sat from 1545 to 1563, and, among other things, discussed the subject of Church music. Grave indeed were the disorders and abuses that existed here, and there was a general desire for reform. The faults to be remedied were practically reducible to two, *viz*:—1st. A degree of elaboration and intricacy in the music so excessive, that the sacred words could no longer be distinguished; and, 2nd, the introduction of melodies in the Church that had been written and used for secular purposes. Masses indeed were based on these profane melodies, and people hearing them were not only precluded from devotion, but even provoked to laughter. Such was the fashion of the times, and no composer dared go in the face of it, for to do so was to incur the reproach of eccentricity and to lose all chance of a hearing. It is true that musical critics and historians have differed considerably in their estimate of the real state of things. Baini in his famous work, which cost him thirty years of arduous study, paints it in the blackest colours, while Ambros seems to assert that there has been much exaggeration in the popularly-received account, and that there were no real abuses or scandals to be remedied. Still the investigation of contemporary music and contemporary records shows conclusively the existence of certain grave abuses, and the wisdom of the Church in causing the question to be dealt with. It is certainly untrue and absurd to state, as has so often been done, that the Church music of those days sinned in being flowery, adorned with endless trills and runs and shakes. These are elements that were not known to music till quite the

meant a body of chaplains, whose duty it was to sing the daily office and Mass in the Pope's chapel. They were also styled the Capella Pontificia, and, in our day, are known as the Sistine Choir. The obligation of Choir has, however, long been removed.

end of the 16th century. The faults were, as has already been stated, that owing to the elaborate technicality and intricacy of the music, the words could no longer be clearly distinguished, and that the *canti fermi* or themes on which Masses were built, were no longer taken, as had been the custom, from some well-known hymn or antiphon, but from the popular love-songs then in vogue, and were even named after them.* As Mr. Rockstro well says:† "A canon that could be sung upside down, as well as backwards and forwards, was more highly esteemed than one that could be sung backwards and forwards only." Lastly, the sacred words were mixed in most strange and terrible ways. Thus one voice would sing *Sanctus*, another *Alleluia*, and yet another *Ave Maria*, simultaneously; and as though this were not sufficient, while the more religious part of the choir were adhering to the words of the Liturgy, the profane portion, nay, and some of the congregation, would introduce the amorous words of the love-song, on which the music had been based. The effect was indescribable. Surely reform was needed!

But was the reform to be total or partial, and how was it to be brought about? The sterner reformers, among whom must be reckoned St. Charles Borromeo, demanded that in future unaccompanied Plain Chant alone should be allowed. This proposal, however, met with deserved opposition, the Pope himself, Pius IV., a lover of music, being averse to it. Now, in August 1564 the Pope created, by a *motu proprio*, a Congregation of Cardinals, known as the Congregation of the Council, to carry out the mind of the Council of Trent in various ecclesiastical bodies in Rome. This Congregation in turn appointed a Committee, consisting of Cardinals Borromeo and Vitellozo, to inquire into and reform the discipline of the Papal Choir, and

* Thus we find Masses bearing such titles as: "L'homme armé," "Mon coeur se recommande à vous," "Baisez-moi," "Des rouges nez," and many others that might be named.

† *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Palestrina."

thus it was that there indirectly came before them the whole question of church-music. As their guide, they had the decree of the Council of Trent, passed in its 22nd Session—a decree, which without going into details, contented itself with merely urging the Bishops to exclude all music from their churches, that was in any way lascivious or impure.* What was the real outcome we shall state later: meanwhile it will be well, for the sake of clearness, to give briefly Baini's legendary account, which has so long been in possession.

To the two Cardinals, then, says Baini, there were added a certain number of singers from the Papal Chapel, who, after much discussion, determined to commission Palestrina to write a model Mass, as a guide for all others. Palestrina felt the responsibility of his position, and was unwilling to entrust so momentous an issue to a single composition. He, therefore, determined to write three Masses, which were performed for the first time on April 28th, 1565, at the palace of Cardinal Vitellozo, in the presence of all the commissioners. Though all three were approved of, the third, commonly known as the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* received the palm, and was declared to be the model for all future Church-compositions: and thus the cause of figured music was saved.

There is a certain romance attaching to this story, and we would fain hold it to be true. But Dr. Haberl, now for upwards of thirty years an indefatigable student of Palestrina's life and times, has pointed out the mistakes in Baini's account, and has furnished us with the actual facts.†

* The decree bears date Sept. 17th, 1562, and forms part of a long decree *de observandis et evitandis in celebratione Missæ.* It runs as follows: "Ab ecclesiis vero musicas eas, ubi sive organo, sive cantu lascivium aut impurum aliquid miscetur, item sæculares omnes actiones, vana atque adeo profana colloquia, deambulationes, strepitus, clamores arceant: ut domus Dei vere domus orationis esse videatur ac dici possit." xii.

† *Kirchen-Musikalisches Jahrbuch,* 1892. "Die Cardinals Kommission von 1564 und Palestrina's Missa Papæ Marcelli."

He has shown that, as has already been stated, it was only *indirectly* that the question of Church-music came before Cardinals Borromeo and Vitellozo, owing to the fact that the *Camera Apostolica*, or Papal Treasury, on which the Papal singers depended for their income, was under their exclusive control. There is no trace of any order being given to Palestrina to write a model Mass. On the 28th of April, 1565,* the singers assembled at the palace of Cardinal Vitellozo, and gave a rendering of some Masses, "to see if the words were rendered in accordance with the wishes of the *Reverendissimi*." † On this occasion, it is probable, that Palestrina was present, and that some of his works were rendered. Possibly, too, the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* ‡ was among those selected for performance. But the works of other masters, Animuccia for example, also received a hearing, and the result of the meeting was merely to emphasize the mind of the Church on the subject, and to urge composers to write strictly and carefully. Let it not, however, be supposed from this that Palestrina had little or no share in reforming the music of the Church, or that we wish in any way to depreciate the immense value of the work which he accomplished. For all seasons of the year, he has provided an abundance of glorious compositions, in

* "Die Sabbati, 28 April, 1565 : Ad instantiam Reverendissimi Cardinalis Vitellotii fuimus congregati in domo ejusdem Reverendissimi ad decantandas aliquot missas, et probandum, si verba intelligerentur prout Reverendissimis placet. (Diary of the Pontifical Chapel, quoted by Haberl, l.c.)

† The title of *Reverendissimus* was at this time reserved to Cardinals.

‡ Dr. Haberl is of opinion that the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* is an *early* work of Palestrina, written between the years 1551 and 1554. Pope Marcellus II., as Cardinal Marcello Cervino, had been most assiduous at the Council of Trent in forwarding the cause of Church-music. He was a friend to all artists, and Palestrina venerated him, and therefore dedicated this Mass to his memory. The oldest manuscript of it is preserved at St. Mary Major's; it was first published with its present title in 1567.

which the full meaning and beauty of the words are brought out, and which from every point of view are beyond praise.

But Palestrina is not the only one that worked in this direction, though he is the greatest, nor was the change for the better brought about "in the twinkling of an eye," as readers of Baini would suppose. The action of the Council of Trent was doubtless a great spur to Palestrina to devote his entire energies to enriching the Church with good music. He lived in Rome, amid Princes of the Church, in constant intercourse with the Popes, so that he was fully aware of what those in authority desired and welcomed. The Church had said what she wanted: Palestrina could supply it: and with what richness and abundance has he done so!

On the 19th of June, 1565, St. Charles Borromeo sang Mass in the Sixtine Chapel, in presence of Pope Pius IV., and on this occasion the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* was performed. The Holy Father was so overcome by the magnificence of this work, that he exclaimed: "These surely are the harmonies of the New Canticle which St. John heard in the heavenly Jerusalem, and of which another John gives us an idea in this earthly Jerusalem!" In the same month he raised his pension and in the following October made him "Composer of the Papal Chapel," a post specially created for him, and "probably the highest musical position in the world at that time." This great work was later bound up with others and dedicated by Palestrina to Philip II. of Spain, in the following words: "The useful and pleasurable manipulation of the art of music is a divine gift, approved most highly in Holy Scripture. It is therefore specially suited for sacred purposes and for the service of the Church. Hence, having for many years devoted myself to this art, and that not wholly in vain, to quote the judgment of others, rather than my own, and following the advice of great and God-fearing men, I felt urged to beautify by new melodies the greatest and most venerable object in the Christian faith, the Mass. At these Masses, I have laboured with the great-

est care, for the glory of God, to Whose goodness I owe the gifts that have fallen to me, however small they be."

We will conclude this important episode in the life of Palestrina by giving some portion of Mr. Rockstro's excellent and scholarly criticism on the *Missa Papæ Marcelli*.* "It would be difficult," he says, "to conceive a more perfect model. In depth of thought, intensity of expression, and all the higher qualities which distinguish the work of the Master from that of the pedant, the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* is universally admitted to be unapproachable; while, even when regarded as a monument of mere mechanical skill, it stands absolutely unrivalled. Yet it depends for its effect upon the introduction of no new element whatever, either of construction, or of form. Avoiding all show of empty pedantry, and carefully concealing the consummate art with which the involutions of its periods are conducted, it freely uses all the old contrivances of Fugue, and in the second *Agnus Dei* of closely interwoven Canon, but always as means towards the attainment of a certain end, never in place of the end itself. And, this entire subjugation of artistic power to the demands of expression, is, perhaps, its most prominent feature. It pervades it throughout, from the first note to the last. . . . Every bar of the Mass conceals a miracle of art. His subjects, all original, and all of extreme simplicity, are treated with an inexhaustible variety of feeling, which shows them every moment in some new and beautiful light. Its style is solemn and devotional throughout; but by no means deficient in fire when the sense of the words demands it." Baini describes the *Kyrie* as devout, the *Gloria* as animated, the *Credo* as majestic, the *Sanctus* as angelic, the *Agnus Dei* as prayerful. The success, power, and beauty of this work consist in "the subjugation of Art to the service of nature, of learning to effect, of ingenuity to the laws of beauty."

* Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, Article "Mass."

During his stay at St. Mary Major's (1561-1571), Palestrina's pen was never idle; and the number of his compositions is indeed wonderful. Volume after volume of Masses and Motets followed each other in rapid succession. These volumes were always dedicated to some Pope, Cardinal, or Prince, who had shown him kindness; the words of his dedications are always very beautiful, and show his deep religious spirit and devotion to music. In dedicating a volume of Motets to Cardinal Pio di Carpi, for example, he writes: "It was the wish of our wise forefathers to employ music as a savour to the Word of God, so that those whose pious and God-fearing disposition leads to the Church, may be retained in her by the combination of voices, singing with such variety and charm. If indeed the same diligence had been bestowed upon the adornment of spiritual songs that has fallen to the lot of corrupt ones, the condition of men would certainly be better. I, for my part, while fully conscious of my feeble powers, have held no occupation of greater importance than the setting to music those songs which are sung in the Church in the course of the year, so that they may afford an agreeable impression to the ear." And again, in dedicating a volume of remarkable Motets in 1569 to Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, he thus writes: "Music exercises great influence over the minds of men, not merely cheering, but also guiding them. Those, then, deserve great censure who use such a gift of God for frivolous or unworthy purposes, exciting men, by nature so prone to evil, to immorality. For my own part, from my youth upwards, I have ever held the misuse of music in horror, and most anxiously have I striven that nothing should proceed from my pen which should make any man more wicked or profane. I am now not far from being an old man, and at my mature age it befits me to direct my mind all the more assiduously to those sublime and serious matters, which alone are worthy of a Christian's regard. In token of these my sentiments, I dedicate to you this book, containing many songs for the Festivals, founded on Church melodies."

In 1570, Palestrina was given charge of the music at the Oratory by St. Philip Neri. Baini brings out clearly his great joy at this appointment and how honoured he felt by it. The Oratory, indeed, was one of the great centres of music at the time in Rome. St. Philip, its founder, "was intensely musical. He was profoundly convinced that there is in music and in song a mysterious and a mighty power to stir the heart with high and noble emotions, and an especial fitness to raise it above sense to the love of heavenly things."* Hence we find it laid down in the Oratorian rule that "the Fathers should by music excite themselves to the contemplation of heavenly things"—"musico concentu excitentur ad cælestia contemplanda." St. Philip therefore introduced music wherever he could in the functions of the Church and in the spiritual exercises which he organized for the young men of Rome, and he bestowed the most unremitting care and attention upon the music of the Oratory. We have already mentioned his early connection with Palestrina, and his friendship for Animuccia. Under Philip's care, "the genius, the poetry, the imagination, and the sacred fire with which God had so richly endowed Palestrina, were put to their noblest use." Philip did much to develop in Palestrina the spirit of devotion and loyalty to the Church which so distinguished him, and thus had a mysterious, secret, but important share, so in keeping with that Saint's whole character, in providing much noble music for the Church; for had not Palestrina been a holy man, he could never have written what he did. It was for the Oratory that Palestrina wrote so many of his spiritual Madrigals.†

The following year (1571), Giovanni Animuccia died, and Palestrina was for the second time appointed choirmaster of St. Peter's, a post which he held till his death,

* *Life of St. Philip Neri*, by Cardinal Capecelatro, translated by T. A. Pope, vol. ii., p. 83.

† Vol. 29 of the great edition of Palestrina's entire works, published by Breitkopf and Härtel, Leipzig.

whilst still keeping up his connection with the Oratory. He at once wrote two Masses,* and in 1572 there followed another volume of Motets, containing the *Tu es Petrus* for six voices, and the well-known *Peccantem me quotidie*. They were dedicated to Duke William of Mantua, and in the dedication Palestrina calls attention to the fact that the volume contained "the first works of his children." †

From the time of Palestrina's re-appointment to the Vatican to his death in 1594, there is but little to record, and the materials for his biography are little more than a list of his works. This, then, affords us an opportunity to dwell awhile upon the character and family life of Pierluigi, as also to attempt some criticism of his works.

Palestrina was a good father and a good husband, and his home life was a sufficiently happy one. Of his four sons, Angelo, Ridolfo, Silla, and Igino, the three first were most promising boys and showed great aptitude for music, in which they were carefully trained by their father, but all three died young, while Igino; who survived his father, was a source of constant annoyance to him, and brought great discredit on his family. The genuine piety and high-mindedness of Pierluigi are seen in every page of his writings, and are borne out by the opinion of his contemporaries, who entertained for him the greatest love and veneration. Though never rich, he always had sufficient to live upon in comfort, and documents show that he was both careful and thrifty.‡ Exaggerated accounts of his poverty are given in most of the current text-books, but recent investigations show them to be void of real foundation. He complains, it

* *O magnum mysterium*, for five voices, and *Veni Creator*, for six voices.

† This fact is, however, their sole claim to notoriety, for in themselves they are mere exercises in harmony.

‡ See especially *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, 1894: 'Synchronistische Tabelle über Giovanni Pierluigi und Orlando di Lasso,' by Dr. Haberl.

is true, of his poverty in the dedication to one of his works, but this must be interpreted to mean that he had not sufficient means to publish all he would wish, nor in as pleasing and attractive a form.

The number of his works is indeed astounding, bearing glorious testimony to the fertility of his genius, to his unflagging industry, and devotion to the Church. His Masses alone number 95, and to these we must add 68 Offertories, 270 Motets, 135 Madrigals, 45 Hymns, with many other compositions, such as Litanies, Magnificats and Lamentations.* The total number of his works is said to be slightly in excess of 900, all abounding in melody, marked by great simplicity, marvellously varied, and, above all, essentially religious and calculated to raise the hearts and minds of men in prayer to God, giving them a foretaste of the music of Heaven. "The music of Palestrina is the most ideally perfect religious music that can be conceived—pure and serene, free from agitation or excitement, though rising at times to a high pitch of exaltation and vigour in the expression of praise and thanksgiving. There is no sentimentality about it and no affectation. It seems to belong almost to a different world from ours, and people who have not wide sympathies and a feeling for what is loftiest and noblest in religion have hardly any chance of entering into it in the fullest sense."† Palestrina raises us entirely from ourselves; his music is that of pure devotion, and is pervaded by a calmness and peace that are not of this world. The conflicts of reason with passion no longer exist; nature is wholly subdued, and the expression is one of ecstatic beauty, of undisturbed contemplation.

"The chant of the Church," as Dr. Ullathorne says, "is the prayer of the Church, is the praise of God, is the worship of our Almighty Creator and all-merciful Redeemer. The chant of the Church is the cry of

* The figures are merely approximate.

† *Studies of Great Composers*, by Dr. Hubert Parry, p. 15.

repentance, is the supplication for mercy, is the entreaty of needy and suffering hearts for grace and divine consolation. The song of the Church is the high-toned expression of the soul's aspirations to God in faith and hope, in love and gratitude. That sacred song blends its voices with the action of the Holy Sacrifice, and worships the Lamb upon the altar, Who hath redeemed us with His Blood. That sacred song is the response of the faithful to the supplications of the priest, who sing with their hearts what the choir sing with their voices."* The principles enumerated in this beautiful passage were fully grasped by Palestrina. Before putting pen to paper, he seems to have placed himself in God's presence, to have realised the place and purpose for which he was to write, and to have drunk in to the full the meaning and force of the sacred words he was about to employ. The Mass and Offices of the Church seem to take possession of his music, instead of his music taking possession of them, as is so often the case. His music, as has well been said, is always *ancilla Domini*, the handmaid of the Lord. It never forces itself on the attention, nor disturbs the prayers of those who hear it, but rather is an agreeable accompaniment and spur to their devotion. It never excites us unduly, and though intensely moving and pathetic, it is so without effort, without endeavouring to be so. It is marked by great repose, singular pathos, delicacy, dignity, and grace. It has a power of speaking to the heart, which few other compositions possess. To each voice Palestrina assigns its full importance; no voice is merely accompanied or supported by the others, but each has its own distinctive meaning and part to play. "No voice is allowed to introduce itself, without having something important to say. There is no such thing as a filling up of the harmony, in any of his works. The harmony is produced by the interweaving of the separate subjects: and when astonished by the unexpected effect of some strangely beautiful chord, we stop to examine

* *Discourse on Church Music*, p. 5.

its structure, we invariably find it to be no more than the natural consequence of some little point of imitation, or the working out of some melodious response, which fell into the delicious combination of its own accord. In no other Master is this peculiarity so strikingly noticeable. It is no uncommon thing for a composer to delight us with a lovely point of repose, but they always seem to put the chord into its place *on purpose;* whereas Palestrina's loveliest harmonies come of themselves, while he is quietly fitting his subjects together, without, so far as the most careful criticism can ascertain, a thought beyond the melodic involutions of his vocal phrases." *

The music of Palestrina is for the most part founded on themes taken from the Gregorian, and his method of treating them is most varied. Often they are harmonised quite simply, yet with a due reverence, for the modulations suggested by the various old Church-modes, out of which each hymn is taken. He is never, however, fettered by a pedantic following of the prescribed intervals of the scale: he will give its spirit rather than its letter. A marvellous instance of this kind of treatment will be found in the last verse of the "Vexilla Regis"—*O Crux ave, spes unica*—one of the most pathetic of all his creations. The tune is in the "first," or Phrygian, mode, from which John Sebastian Bach has drawn some of his noblest inspirations; its expression is one of great majesty, but its grandeur is tempered by the most solemn sadness and tenderness. Palestrina's treatment of the tune is most characteristic. Its grandeur and majesty he brings out unimpaired by means of great simplicity and restraint in the structure of the harmony, while the tender sadness which he infuses into the melody at the words *hoc passionis tempore* and *reisque dele crimina* is so touching, that the heart must indeed be hard that is unmoved by it.

Another method of treatment, and one in which we

* Article "School" in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, by W. S. Rockstro.

discover the so-called "style" of Palestrina, consists in the weaving together of the voices in the most wonderfully intricate and scientific combinations, the different sections of each tune being treated as subjects for fugues and canons, and one subject being frequently employed as counterpoint to another. His great Masses abound in such devices; but the device is always the spontaneous and natural expression of the composer's thought, and ever subservient to the emotional feeling he wishes to arouse.

His themes are chosen from the Hymnal rather than from the Antiphonal, hymn tunes being essentially of a more rhythmical nature than the prose antiphons, and consequently more suggestive of that rhythmical treatment, which is the fundamental characteristic of all classical music. But Palestrina's rhythmical sense is of that true and vigorous kind, that prefers energy and expressiveness to mere symmetry: and thus we find him "aptly and variously drawing out" his periods, as the exigencies of the text require. And here perhaps is found the secret of the difficulty of performing his music. It is idle to speak of the "phrasing of Palestrina's music" as a "lost art." The performance must always follow the natural and spontaneous impulse of the composer, who has adapted his musical sentences to the emotions he would express. And thus, for an adequate performance of one of his compositions, neither more nor less is required than an adequate *understanding* of it; and a pedantic following of prescribed "expression-marks" and "legato-bows," can never result in that truly devotional rendering, which Palestrina's music so eminently demands. By such means, we may attain to a sonorous and even "highly-finished" rendering, but the hearer will remain cold and unimpressed. The singers must realise in fact, that they are engaged in arousing in the hearts of the faithful those emotions, which are the outcome of the thoughts expressed in the Liturgy of the Church—emotions not read into those thoughts by some impressionist, but found in them and nobly expressed by a devout and saintly genius.

Palestrina was to such a degree the master of intellectual form, that abstruse and complicated combinations are to him both natural and spontaneous: so that whether he sings to us in some simply-harmonised melody, or in the most marvellously artificial fugue, the expression is always the same—it is one of touching simplicity, of child-like sweetness and devotion. Who can ever forget the impression made by the first hearing of the great six-part Mass? What a revelation of tone-colour is to be obtained from the voices, of effects as varied as ever Wagner could produce from his orchestra! But perhaps of all that can be said of the external presentation of his works, their most striking feature is that every note in every part is essentially a singing note; not merely vocal as contrasted to instrumental, but vocal with the very ideal fulness of song, fraught with love for the sweetness and holiness of the human voice upraised in the praise of God.

It has been said that Palestrina was a reformer and innovator. He was a reformer in the best sense of the word, but in no sense was he an innovator. He used the material that was to hand, purified it of all that was bad and embellished it by his noble use of what was good. By so doing he has enriched the Church with an inexhaustible repertory of truly religious music for all seasons of the Christian year—a repertory strangely ignored and neglected, but which will ever prove to be the true store-house by which the devotion and reverence of the Christian family for the things of God are to be kept alive and nurtured. That it is so ignored and neglected is due chiefly to the inefficiency of the majority of our choirs. The music of Palestrina is doubtless difficult, though in reality so simple. But for the pitch to be maintained, the words to be clearly articulated, the light and shade to be carefully adjusted, the quality of the tone to be round and pure, the phrasing to be intelligent and distinct,—all this requires no small training and perseverance. And this our choirs will not face. At certain seasons of the year, they probably give a poor

rendering of some of Palestrina's works; it is voted dull, if not painful, to listen to: they grow disgusted, and seek a sorry refuge in works in which they may take liberties and yet avoid detection, and wherein there is ample scope for personal display, for which happily we find no opportunity in the works of Palestrina. It is here, then, that a beginning must be made, if Palestrina and his noble associates are again to be accorded their true position. Our choirs must be educated, especially by a greater use of boys' voices, to the exclusion of women, their ears attuned to the beauties of Palestrina, and thus gradually the works of the *Principe della Musica* will be more universally known, will be rendered with real taste and finish, and, above all, with devotion, and his merits will be appreciated.

But to resume our narrative. In 1575 Palestrina published a volume of Motets, containing the two famous numbers, *Hodie Christus natus est* and *Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem*, which are not surpassed by any of his other compositions. In this same year, Gregory XIII. granted a Jubilee, and a little event occurred in connection with it, which must have been most gratifying to Palestrina. From his native town there marched to Rome a band of more than 500 pilgrims, headed by a hundred children, 'clothed as angels,' with branches of olive in their hands. Three choirs had been formed from amongst them, and as they marched they sang—and their music was that of Pierluigi, of whom they were so justly proud.

In the following year (1576), Pope Gregory gave Palestrina a task of a most laborious and thankless nature, and one which he found most irksome and distasteful, though too loyal a son of the Church to refuse it. It was to revise and arrange the Gradual and Antiphonal. To his famous pupil Guidetti, Palestrina entrusted the Antiphonal, reserving the Gradual for himself, of which, however, he only completed the first part—the *Proprium de Tempore*. This was published in 1614 after a final revision by Felice Anerio and Fran-

cesco Suriano, two of Palestrina's pupils.* Guidetti published his share of the task in 1582, under the title of *Directorium Chori*, and in his preface says, that though well used to editing Church music, he had not trusted his own judgment, but had handed over the whole work for the correction and inspection of "*viro musicæ artis facile principi, Joanni Petro Aloysio.*"†

On July 21st, 1580, the death of Lucrezia de Goris ended Palestrina's long and happy married life, and his grief knew no bounds. "I will now say farewell to music," he wrote, "for music and mourning do not go well together. I will now occupy myself solely with the tremendous thoughts of my latter end, and the last of my works shall be the motet, *Super flumina Babylonis.*"

Sorrow mellows men, and Palestrina's later works (for happily he changed his purpose), are marked by the deepest pathos and feeling. Palestrina is an instance of what not unfrequently happens to those who give way to excessive grief, for, by a kind of reaction, in less than a year he married again—Virginia Dormuli, a widow, with a considerable furrier's business, and some landed property.‡ This, though an unromantic episode, ameliorated his worldly position, and enabled him to publish more of his works.

In the same year he commenced the series of Motets to words taken from the Canticle of Canticles, which have ever been regarded as among the finest of his compositions. Pope Gregory XIII., to whom they were dedicated, gladly accepted them from

* Dr. Haberl has thrown much light on this point by his pamphlet: *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and das Graduale Romanum der editio Medicaea von* 1614 (Pustet, Ratisbon, 1894), but much of its contents is of little interest to the general reader.

† Quoted by Haberl, op. cit: p. 13. Guidetti's other famous works are: *Cantus Ecclesiasticus Passionis D.N. Jesu Christi secundum quattuor Evangelistas*, published in 1586, *Cantus Ecclesiasticus Officii Majoris Hebdomadæ*, published in 1587, and *Præfationes in cantu firmo*, published in 1588.

‡ Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch. 1894. p. 94.

the hand of Palestrina, saying: "It will not be difficult to discover the genius of the giver in the gift." To which Palestrina replied: "God grant that my heart may be inflamed with a spark of Divine love, even as I have endeavoured to express with fire the divine sentiments of this poem." The dedicatory epistle is very beautiful, showing, as it does, Palestrina's high idea of the dignity of music, and his deep sorrow that he had ever turned it to secular uses. Be it said, however, that his songs of this class are sentimental merely, and not in the least obscene or lascivious. "But too many poets," he writes, "have composed songs, the words of which treat of love that is estranged to the Christian faith and name. Yet musicians have not cast aside these poems, but many of them have spent their art and diligence to adapt them to music. And by such compositions, they have made for themselves a name, though, to cultivated and serious men, they have, by their choice of bad material, given great offence. It makes me blush and fills me with grief that I too did once belong to this class. But though what has been done cannot now be undone, and though foolishness once committed cannot be recalled, I have changed my views, and have already set to music songs in honour of our Lord and of His holy Mother. And now I have selected those that extol the love of Christ for His Bride—the Song of Solomon. I have written them in a tone more animated than is my wont in music for the Church, but my subject seemed to require this." In 1584, the year in which these Motets were printed, he published yet another volume of Motets, dedicated to Cardinal Andrea Battore,* some numbers of which Baini admired so much, as to say that in writing them Palestrina must have regarded himself simply as the amanuensis of Almighty God.†

* These, with the Motets on the Canticle of Canticles, form vol. 4 of Breitkopf and Härtel's edition.

† The numbers specially selected are *Paucitas dierum meorum*, and *Peccavi, peccavi, quid faciam tibi.*

Before long three new Masses were ready,* and in dedicating them to Pope Gregory XIII., Palestrina writes: "From my youth I have devoted myself to the study of music, and many are of opinion that I have accomplished something in this direction, though I am fully conscious how little it really is. Yet all my progress in this study I am determined to use solely for the glory of God in songs of praise. And since among these, the most beautiful and the most pleasing to God are those which are sung at the Holy Mass, I have selected these trifling compositions to lay as an offering at your feet, and, with your permission, I intend to publish them."

In April, 1585, Gregory died and was succeeded by Sixtus V., to whom Palestrina at once sent an offering of a Mass and Motet (*Tu es pastor ovium*). They had been hurriedly composed, and Sixtus remarked on hearing them: "Palestrina has forgotten the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* and the Motets on the Canticles." Nothing daunted, he again set to work and composed the glorious Mass *Assumpta est Maria* for six voices, which was printed and learnt in time to be performed on the Feast of the Assumption of that year. The Pope himself sang Mass in the church of St. Mary Major, and in his delight with the music, exclaimed: "To-day we had indeed a new Mass, which could only come from the pen of our Pierluigi: the other day I complained of his music, but to-day I am again quite charmed with it. May he often refresh our memory in so pleasant a manner." Sixtus had a special liking for the hymns of the Church and used to hum them to himself: Palestrina, therefore, having in 1586 published three new Masses,† and in the following year, at the request of the Pope, his Lamentations for Holy Week, now turned his attention to the hymns for the year

* Their titles are *Viri Galilaei*, *Te Deum laudamus* and *Dum complerentur*, all for six voices,

† Their titles are *Salve Regina* (for five voices), *O Sacrum Convivium* (for five voices), and *Ecce ego Joannes* (for six voices).

and published them in 1589, with a dedication to the Pope.* Sixtus V. died in 1590, and his successor Urban VII. reigned only thirteen days. On Gregory XIV. being elevated to St. Peter's chair, Palestrina at once, as was his wont, sent him a volume of his compositions. Among those selected for the new Pontiff was the great *Stabat Mater* for eight voices, of which Richard Wagner has furnished us with so splendid an edition.

It was about this time that Palestrina contracted a friendship with William II. Duke of Bavaria. In gratitude for more than one present of money, Palestrina dedicated to him in 1590 a volume of Masses, among which were the well-known *Æterna Christi munera* and *Iste Confessor*. "There are, and always have been," says Palestrina in his dedication, "many princes and lords, who honour music as a heavenly and divine gift, and who are wondrously charmed by its marvellous sweetness. Yet I know of scarce anyone who could be compared to you in his zealous patronage of art. For what the rich as a rule spend on foolish play and useless amusements, you devote to the cause of sacred music, sparing no trouble or expense, that you may most richly adorn by the beauty and power of song the services of the Church, at which you daily assist with great devotion. From all parts you seek for the best singers, and richly do you reward them. With kindly feelings you receive the works that are sent to you in this branch of art, and with admirable generosity you recompense them. As I have experienced this more than once, and feel myself greatly indebted to you, I am forced to think both night and day how best to pay off this debt and prove my gratitude to you. Therefore, though you already possess such an abundance of musical compositions, that I fear, as the saying is, 'to carry owls to Athens,' yet I have ventured to dedicate to your high and exalted name this volume of Masses, lately published by me."

* Vol. 8, of the edition of Breitkopf and Härtel.

The last year (1593) of the life of Palestrina was probably the most prolific of any. In it he published his volume of no less than 68 offertories for five voices,* covering the whole ecclesiastical year, two volumes of Litanies, another volume of Masses, and, lastly, 30 Spiritual Madrigals, in honour of Our Blessed Lady, dedicated to Christina, the wife of Ferdinand de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Other works were on hand, but in January 1594, he was seized with an attack of pleurisy, of which he died. He felt his end had come, and prepared for it with the greatest care and resignation. We cannot describe the death of Palestrina better than in the words of Cardinal Capecelatro.† "On the 26th of January 1594, Palestrina took to his bed. Finding his strength diminish, he sent for St. Philip, who ran eagerly to cheer him with his presence, and soothe him with his ineffable charity. The next day Philip heard his general confession; on the 28th he received Holy Viaticum, and on the 31st the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Philip scarcely quitted the Vatican, in which Palestrina was lodged, and was always at the side of his tenderly loved disciple, with words of consolation and of hope. Finding himself worse on the 31st, Pierluigi sent for his son Igino, embraced him and blessed him, and gave him counsel befitting a Christian father on the threshold of eternity. He then added: 'I charge you that all my unpublished works be printed, as soon as may be, for the glory of God most high, and for His worship in His holy temples.' Then he blessed him once more, and bade him farewell.

"On the 1st of February, the inflammation and fever had greatly increased, but he was still able to pass the whole day in prayer and converse with his dear Father Philip. At dawn of day on the Feast of the Purification, Palestrina remembered with gratitude and joy that, but a few days before,

* Vol. 9 of the edition of Breitkopf and Härtel.

† *Life of St. Philip*, vol. ii., pp. 102, 103.

he had composed and printed the *Laudi* of Mary, and this remembrance gave him renewed fervour and hope. And then Philip said to him, with a countenance lighted up with the love of God: 'O my son, would it gladden you to go to enjoy the feast which to-day is held in Heaven in honour of the Queen of Angels and of Saints?' A thrill of tender emotion passed through the heart of the dying man, he paused awhile and then answered: 'Yes, surely, I do most eagerly desire it; may Mary my advocate obtain for me this grace from her Divine Son!' Scarcely had he uttered these words, when in fullest possession of all his powers, full of peace and trust in the mercy of the Lord, he gently breathed out his soul to God, and went, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the prayers of his holy confessor Philip, where the song of divine praise flows on unceasingly." He was buried in the old St. Peter's, in the chapel of SS. Simon and Jude, and on his tomb were inscribed the words: "Johannes Petrus Aloysius Praenestinus, Musicae Princeps."

We must thus conclude this short notice of the life and works of this "Prince of Music," trusting that the recent increase of interest in his works will be steadily maintained, that he will become daily better known and admired, and that this little biography may have its humble share in bringing about so desirable a result.

Blessed Margaret Mary.

1646–1690.

By Lady Amabel Kerr.

Blessed Margaret was born on the 22nd of July, 1646, at Lhautecour, one of the scattered, straggling hamlets of which the village of Verosvres, lying in a rocky valley in the heart of Burgundy, is composed. She was born into a position of some importance for that remote part of the world, for her father held the post, first of notary, and subsequently of judge of the surrounding district. This, together with the fact that his brother Anthony was parish-priest of Verosvres for a considerable number of years, made the name of Alacoque one of the best known and most respected in the neighbourhood.

Four sons, John, Claude, Chrysostom, and James, with Margaret, the only surviving daughter, made up the family of Claude Alacoque: but besides his own wife and children, the worthy notary provided a home for his maiden sister, Catherine, and his married sister, Benoite, together with her husband, Toussaint Delaroche, and their tribe of young children.

The house in which this patriarchal family dwelt still stands, in very much the same condition as it was then. It is divided into two parts by a court-yard, in the centre of which the old well, with its pent-roof of granite slabs, remains untouched. So also does the outside gallery, by which the rooms of the upper floor are reached by means of a flight of granite steps; for at Verosvres, as in many mountainous districts, slabs of stone serve the purpose equally of planks, tiles, and bricks. The dwelling part of the house was mostly composed of large low rooms, opening out of one of which is Blessed Margaret's little bed-chamber, now converted into a chapel.

The building stands in the middle of a large garden, terminating in a narrow, rocky valley, on the further

side of which stands the parish church. This valley was Margaret's favourite resort when she wished to be alone with God, and is sanctified by her prayers and mystical communion with Him.

Here, in this remote home, and under the eye of her good parents, Margaret passed the earliest years of her life, imbibing the things of God with a rare aptitude. But when she was only four years old she went to live for a time with her godmother, Madame de Faulvières, the wealthy lady of Corcherel, who was childless, and would no doubt, had she lived, have adopted Margaret as her own. The change of scene developed in the child all the qualities which afterwards made our Divine Lord choose her as the humble recipient of His intimate revelations. Though only three miles away from Lhautecour, the features of the country were very different from those of her own home; and Margaret herself has described how she loved to lose herself in the solitude of the grand old forest which surrounded Corcherel, there in her baby way to commune with God. In the chapel attached to the castle she spent many hours, kneeling with bare knees, impelled by some divine instinct to show in this manner her greater reverence for the Blessed Sacrament.

It was while she was at Corcherel that she performed an act which perhaps changed the destinies of her whole life. When barely seven years old she was moved to make a vow of perpetual chastity, the meaning of which she did not understand. All she knew was that it meant an entire gift of herself to God; and as such she made it. That it was, however, a real vow, binding on her conscience, will be seen in the sequel.

Madame de Faulvières died in 1655, when Margaret was only eight years old; and as she had made no provision for her little god-daughter, the child returned to her father's home. There, however, a fresh loss awaited her, for in the same year Claude Alacoque died, leaving his temporal affairs in a most wretched state, which necessitated not only a complete revolution in domestic arrangements, but the breaking up of the family. The two eldest boys were sent to be educated at Cluny, while their uncle Anthony undertook the charge of

Chrysostom and James. Madame Alacoque, weak in health, and never possessed of much strength of mind, tried to keep her little daughter with her; but having consigned her to the charge of a maid who proved to be anything but a good companion for a young girl, she was sent to a school kept by the Poor Clares at Charolles.

There, at the age of nine, Margaret made her First Communion; and there also she was confirmed, and took in addition to her baptismal name that of Mary, which is so inseparably connected with her memory. At Charolles, moreover, she made her first acquaintance with the cloistered life, the deep impression received being probably indelible. A serious and lingering illness curtailed her school life, and compelled the Poor Clares to send the child home to her mother; and it was only after four years of suffering and invalid life that she recovered her health.

During those long lingering years of suffering the young girl's heart was drawn to prayer. Fearing that in spite of her fervour she did not know how to pray rightly, Margaret implored God to teach her the secret. Even in those days our Blessed Lord made His presence manifestly known to her, and spoke to her in a way that was palpable to her senses and not only to her soul. She was never surprised at this, for she thought that everyone who prayed experienced the same that she did. In this sensible manner He showed the sick child how to pray, in a way that she has herself described. "My sovereign Lord," she says, "taught me how to do it, and to this method I have kept all my life. He made me kneel humbly before Him, and ask pardon for everything whereby I had offended Him; and then, having adored Him, I offered to Him my prayer, without knowing how to set about it. Then He presented Himself to me in the mystery He willed me to contemplate, and He so fixed my mind on it, holding my soul, and all my powers so absorbed in Him, that I felt no distraction. My heart was consumed with the desire to love Him; and this desire gave me an insatiable longing for Holy Communion, as well as for suffering." Thus does she first make mention of

that desire for suffering, which was to become, as it were, the ruling passion of her life.

Meanwhile, the home at Lhautecour was quite changed from what it had been in the happy days of Margaret's childhood. The establishment was completely under the control of the Delaroches, Toussaint having undertaken to put his brother-in-law's money affairs straight. No doubt he was a strictly honest and upright man, actuated by the sole desire to accomplish the task he had undertaken; but it is also certain that he and his wife caused their authority to be felt most disagreeably, and placed Madame Alacoque and her daughter in an unnecessarily subordinate position. They could do nothing without the permission of the virtual masters of the house; the stores, and even their clothes, being kept under lock and key. When Margaret, longing to pour out her troubles at the foot of the altar, asked leave to go to the church, it was harshly refused by her aunt, who, adding insult to her tyranny, accused her niece of wishing to keep some private assignation under pretence of a desire to say her prayers.

Margaret's gentle spirit sank under this harsh treatment, and she describes her state as one of constant fear. When she could, she would escape into the garden, and there hide for the whole day, not daring to return home, and tasting no food, unless some kind-hearted peasant, indignant, no doubt, at the conduct of her relatives, brought her some fruit or milk. Her favourite retreat was, as has already been mentioned, the rocky valley at the extremity of the garden. Although to reach the church from that spot involved a circuitous and laborious ascent, it seemed quite close to the girl as she gazed at it across the valley: and casting herself on her knees under the shelter of a certain large granite boulder, she became lost in prayer, regardless of the scolding which she knew awaited her on her return to the house.

This hard and mortifying life was very fruitful to Margaret's soul; for she was not slow in making use of the daily opportunities it afforded her of gratifying that love of suffering which our Blessed Lord had implanted in her heart. Not only did she welcome all the oc-

casions of indulging it that came to her, calling those who inflicted it by no other name than that of "the dear benefactors of her soul," but she supplemented their severity by the most heroic acts of voluntary mortification. It was not until her health began to give way under this treatment that her mother discovered it, and put a temporary stop to it by making her sleep with her—a mortification which Margaret describes as greater to her than any other.

The girl craved for privacy, not only in order to continue her self-macerations, but also to conceal the fervour of her prayers, and the favours with which our Divine Lord now began to load her He almost habitually presented Himself sensibly to her, either as crucified, as carrying the Cross, or as the *Ecce Homo*, thus increasing tenfold her thirst for suffering. "It was at this time," she writes, while describing her domestic persecutions, "that my Divine Master disclosed to me, without my comprehending the manner of His doing so, that it was His wish to be absolute ruler of my heart, rendering my life in all things conformable to His suffering life. He wished to make Himself present to my soul, so as to enable me to act as He Himself had acted in the midst of His cruel Passion, which He endured for love of me. From that moment my soul was so deeply impressed that I could have wished my sufferings never to cease for a single instant. . . . . I desired to consume myself in His Presence like the wax which I saw burning on the altar, so as thus to give back love for love."

The mode of these manifestations is difficult to comprehend, for though our Lord made His Presence sensibly felt by her, He did not at that time, or till some years later, appear to her in person, as He did when He made to her His revelations of the Sacred Heart, when she nearly died from the effects of what she saw. "I see Him," she writes when trying to explain what she experienced, "I feel Him near me, and I hear Him much better than I could with my bodily senses."

Thus was Margaret apparently getting nearer and nearer to God, and, probably, to the religious life; when suddenly her circumstances were changed, and

events occurred which prevented her from giving herself entirely to God, and kept her in the world for seven long years. When she was sixteen, her eldest brother, John, who had reached man's estate, came home, and took the management of his affairs into his own hands. Thanks to his uncle's rigid and harsh economy, John found himself in the enviable position of a wealthy young man, and filled his house with gay and congenial society.

Strange as it may seem to us who have been allowed to peep behind the veil of Margaret's interior life, made up of absorbed prayer and intimate communion with God, she was for a time carried away by the life of pleasure into which she was plunged. Under the influence of contact with the world, her prayers grew fewer, and her reception of the sacraments less frequent. She was not, however, allowed to walk unhindered on the lower level she had chosen. Our Divine Lord, still making Himself manifest to her as He had done when she listened more readily to His voice, pursued her even into the midst of the gay and giddy company she frequented, and there pierced her through and through with the pain of divine love. The struggle thus engendered within her soul was truly terrible, and cost her veritable anguish. Night after night, when she returned from her pleasures, she would cast herself on her face before God in the solitude of her little room, imploring His pardon and taking the most pitiless revenge on her frail body. And then, once more the intoxication of pleasure would master her, to be followed in its turn by the same remorse and sanguinary mortifications. Be it understood that her amusements at this time were, in the eyes of the world, innocent enough, and that no breath of slander ever attached itself to her name. Even what she always called her 'great sin,' that of going masked to some carnival revel, was an action that nobody condemned. But to the end of her life, Blessed Margaret did unceasing penance for those months of worldliness.

It was not long, however, before her Divine Master resumed complete dominion over the soul of His servant. Appearing one day before her as He was when

He had been scourged, He laid His condition to her charge, and reproached her for thus persecuting Him, after all the tokens of love that He had lavished on her. From that moment pleasure had no longer any attraction for her, and she felt moved to consecrate herself without further delay entirely to God. But the time of trial and temptation was by no means over; and the first mention of the religious life drew down on her a storm that she had not anticipated.

Both her elder brothers died unmarried in the prime of their youth, and Chrysostom was now head of the family. He was married, and the arrival of a somewhat uncongenial daughter-in-law as mistress of the house was very unpleasant to Madame Alacoque. Vehemently, and even tearfully, she urged her daughter to marry, so as to afford her an independent home, and render her last years happy.

Margaret felt the keenest aversion from the married state; but her love for God having been weakened by the worldly life she had been leading, she might out of mere tenderness for her mother have yielded to her wishes, had it not been for that vow of chastity made by her when she was little more than an infant. The struggle between her love for God and her affection for her mother was very terrible; for Madame Alacoque did not spare her daughter's feelings, and assured her she should die of grief if she did not accede to her wishes; and, still more, if she entered religion.

Perhaps this outer pressure was less hard to resist than the new and sudden repugnance to the religious life with which her Divine Master suffered her to be seized. On one hand she disliked the thought of the trammels that any rule would put on her devotion; and on the other she dreaded the heights of perfection to which it might bind her. She tried to make a compromise. She studied the lives of the saints, but avoided those whom she thought nearest to God. "Opening a book," she says, "I would say to myself: Come, let me look for a saint easy to imitate, so that I may be like her!" But she found to her dismay that even those whom she considered least elevated in their holiness cared only and entirely for the things of God.

Then, even while she had not even the moral courage finally to dismiss the various suitors for her hand, whom her mother encouraged, she tried to satisfy her conscience by leading a semi-religious life in the world; by practising obedience, and devoting herself to the care of the poor and sick. Overcoming her natural repugnance to children, she used to gather together the waifs and strays of the neighbourhood, and in spite of the half good-natured gibes of Chrysostom, and the scoldings of her maiden-aunt Catherine, she taught them their religion in the old smoke and time blackened hall which still exists. But, as was to be expected, all these good works, instead of making her satisfied with the world, brought her ever nearer to the religious life, into which the grace of God was driving her.

The time came speedily when her Divine Master would no longer permit His chosen spouse to vacillate. "Learn," said He to her one memorable day, after she had received Communion; "Learn that if thou despisest Me, and doest this thing, I will leave thee for ever. But if thou art faithful I will not forsake thee, and will gain for thee the victory over thine opponents. I excuse thine ignorance, for thou knowest Me not yet; but if thou art faithful I will teach thee to know Me."

Before she left the church that morning Margaret solemnly renewed the vow of her childhood, and when she reached home she announced her irrevocable determination to enter religion. No further active opposition was made to her wishes, though her relatives confidently assured her that her obstinancy would kill her mother. We hear but little more of Madame Alacoque; but as she did not die till 1676, it is satisfactory to know that she did not carry out her threat of dying from the effects of her daughter's desertion.

In spite of the nominal withdrawal of all opposition on the part of her family they contrived to delay the final settlement of her fortune for three years, till Margaret in her helplessness cried to God to send her some one who could help her. "Am not I sufficient?" was the secret answer vouchsafed to her. "What dost thou fear?" Still God condescended to her appeal, and sent the human help for which she

craved. A mission was preached at Verosvres by a Franciscan friar; and Margaret, having opened her heart to him and related her trials and difficulties, he undertook to remonstrate with Chrysostom, and persuade him that in resisting his sister's vocation, he was resisting God. His words were effectual; and on the 25th of May, 1671, her brother took her at her request to the Convent of the Visitation at Paray, to make inquiries whether she could be received there.

That the hand of God was in her choice we know, but it does not seem clear what special reasons prompted her in her selection either of the Visitation or of the particular convent at Paray. The only motive that she assigned was that it was removed from her home and from all her friends, "I wish to enter religion for God alone," said she. "I wish to leave the world entirely, and hide myself in some corner where I can forget it, and be as completely forgotten by it." She further relates that while making inquiries about various convents, the moment the name of Paray was mentioned, her heart dilated, and she at once expressed a wish to go there. And as that day she crossed the threshold with Chrysostom, she knew that she had found her home, and looked so blithe and gay that those who beheld her said that she would never be a nun.

Her final choice was made, and after a few last weeks spent at home, she left it for good, on June 25, 1671, having nearly completed her twenty-sixth year. Her desire was accomplished, and she was filled with an apparent calmness as she bade farewell to her family; but suddenly her human heart broke down, and she shed such torrents of tears as to scandalize those who beheld her.

Paray has been described as a solitude full of the presence of God and the forgetfulness of the world; and probably in no convent within her reach would Blessed Margaret have met with such opportunities of practising those virtues most dear to her. Nowhere, moreover, would the favours bestowed on her by our Lord have been more searchingly tried in the fire than they were there. The unusual ways by which God led her during

her nineteen years of conventual life, and the ceaseless contradictions and trials which He suffered her to endure at the hands of the pious nuns who formed the community at Paray, are among those mysteries of His Providence which can be explained to us only by the heights of perfection to which the blessed servant of God was led by their means.

The wave of rigidity, which in the outer world culminated in Jansenism and Port-Royal, had penetrated this cloister sufficiently to infuse into its spiritual life a certain element of austerity and want of imagination which rendered it an uncongenial birthplace for such a devotion as was revealed within its walls. The passion of the community for the rule as given to them by their saintly founders, St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, took the form of an uncompromising indignation at any apparent deviation from it, and even at any form of piety which seemed to them like an innovation. When recounting the virtues of Sister Seraphica de la Martiniére, nothing further could be said in her praise than that she had looked on everything elevated and sublime with suspicion. "My rule, my superior, my ordinary confessor; these are enough for me!" were the treasured and oft-repeated words of Sister Catherine Marest; while the self-imposed maxim of Sister Hyacinth Courtine—"Nothing more and nothing less than the rule"—had been adopted as a proverb by the community. That this devotion to the rule was no empty form of words was proved by the name of the "Thabor of superiors," which had been given to the convent at Paray.

The special devotions which marked the religious life of the sisters were characteristic of the spirit which governed them. One was renowned for her devotion to the immensity of God, and another to His justice; while another was so penetrated by the sense of His majesty that she always did her work kneeling. Several, indeed, were remarkable for their love for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; but devotion to the crucifix was the chief characteristic of the community. In short, generosity marked every action of these nuns, to the detriment, perhaps, of that tenderness which so peculiarly belonged to their founder.

During her noviciate our Divine Lord deigned to inundate the soul of Blessed Margaret with spiritual favours such as she had not before experienced. Her first request to the mistress of novices had been to be taught how to pray. "Go," said Mother de Thouvant in reply, "place yourself before God like a canvas before a painter, and let Him paint on it whatsoever He will." These words made a great impression on Margaret's mind, and had much influence on her method of prayer; but when she spoke them, the mistress of novices had but little idea what designs our Lord intended to engrave on the heart of His servant.

The moment she placed herself upon her knees to pray, all her faculties were absorbed in the contemplation of God. Constantly, nay almost continually, did her Divine Master present Himself to her senses under one or other of two aspects, which she tried under obedience to describe, defining them as the holiness of justice and the holiness of love. Under the first aspect He was so terrible that the vision crushed her, kept her perforce on her knees, and made her long to annihilate herself at His feet. So great a horror of herself did it inspire, that had not those present snatched the discipline from her hands, she would have cut herself to pieces. Under the aspect of the holiness of love, our Divine Lord's presence overwhelmed her in another way, making her so long for union with Him that she knew no rest by day or by night. "O my God!" she cried, "either cease Thy sweetness, or increase my capacity for receiving it." So great was her interior joy at that time that she was as one beside herself; and yet so keen was her desire for suffering that she begged her Divine Master to discontinue His favours. "Alas, my Lord," said she, "and wilt Thou never let me suffer?" And then for her consolation, He showed her a cross covered with flowers, and told her that the blossoms would fall off one by one, and the thorns only remain. And these words were as balm to her yearning soul.

But even while the Lord thus loaded her with favours He rebuked her for every slightest infidelity in His service. "Learn," said He, "that I am a holy master

and a teacher of holiness, who cannot endure the smallest stain." On one occasion when she had given way to some passing movement of vanity while speaking of herself, He appeared to her, transformed by His anger, "What art thou, O dust and ashes," said He, "that thou canst take glory to thyself, for thou art nothingness! That thou mayst not forget that which thou art, I will place before thee a picture of thyself." And as for a moment God suffered her to see herself as He saw her, she was so crushed to the earth, that it seemed as if she would die. "O my God," she cried in anguish, "either slay me or take away the picture!"

Meanwhile, the supernatural life that this servant of God was leading was the source of much disquietude in the community, for her ways were not the ways of those around her. The superior at Paray was Mother de Saumaise, who had been appointed to that office soon after Blessed Margaret's clothing; and the unusual spiritual life of the young novice filled her with the most anxious doubts as to the reality of her vocation. While their superior hesitated and sought for light and guidance, the religious as a body forestalled her judgment, and conceived a violent dislike for the humble servant of God, the character of whose interior life seemed to them so contrary to the unostentatious, hidden spirit of the Visitation. It is true that Margaret put a tremendous strain upon herself to observe the smallest details of the rule, and was even heroic in her efforts to overcome whatever was repugnant to her, nor could anyone deny her humble obedience; but it was equally true that all her endeavours were futile to produce anything like conformity to the pattern presented to her of what a nun of the Visitation ought to be.

She was tried at one employment after the other; but in vain. If put to sweep the passages, the broom would fall from her hands, and she would remain absorbed in God! So too, when sent to help in the kitchen, her so-called absence of mind threatened disasters to the health and lives of the community. For a time she was placed as assistant infirmarian under the practical Sister Catherine Marest, who, in conscientious discharge of her duty, ruled the humble

novice with a rod of iron. But her work among the sick was attended with no better success than elsewhere; and an infirmarian who in the midst of her duties was apt to get lost to things of time and sense could not be tolerated. In order that no chance might be given her of indulging her visionary tendencies, she was set for some time to keep guard over an ass and her foal, and prevent them from trespassing on the vegetable garden. Resisting her longing for prayer, Margaret kept steadfastly to her task; and for this faithful obedience God rewarded her in a way she has thus described: "So happy was I in this occupation that I should not have cared if it had lasted all my life. My sovereign Lord kept me such faithful company that all my running about did not deprive me of His presence; and I experienced as much consolation as if I had been before the Blessed Sacrament."

As the year of Margaret's noviciate drew towards its close, Mother de Saumaise's state of indecision grew more painful; for holy, humble, and obedient as she believed the servant of God to be, she could not forget that when they had founded the Visitation, St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, kneeling side by side, had petitioned God never to send any extraordinary graces to the Order. The very favours and exceptional gifts bestowed on His servant by God seemed to stand in the way of her vocation. Consequently, the year was allowed to pass without her making her profession. Some months later, however, Mother de Saumaise, dissatisfied with her own decision, relented, on condition that Margaret would petition God to lead her by more ordinary ways; and on the 6th of November, 1672, she took her vows.

From henceforward the servant of God was, according to her own expression, ruled by three tyrants, the love of contempt, the love of suffering, and the love of Jesus Christ. The one thing she feared was praise; and she implored her Divine Master never to let her be known for anything except what would draw on her blame and confusion. "I shall never have peace of soul," she writes, "until I am in an abyss of suffering and humiliation, unknown to the world and everlastingly forgotten.

If only people knew the desire I have to be humbled and despised, no doubt their charity would move them to gratify me." Prompted by her fear of praise and vain glory, she sometimes acted in a way to draw down on her our Blessed Lord's reproaches. Thus, knowing how her states of absorption in prayer were watched and criticized by her companions, she took to going to her cell to pray, instead of remaining in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament. "Learn," said her Divine Master to her, "that if thou withdrawest from My presence thou wilt repent it; and so will those who are the cause of it. I will hide My presence from them, and they shall not find Me when they seek Me."

Most willingly did Margaret yield herself to what she called the second of her three tyrants, for it was only suffering, she said, that made her life endurable. Now began that long life of physical pain which ceased only with her death, and which was increased year by year by new and supernatural torments. She welcomed with real joy every opportunity of suffering that came to her from natural causes. Thus we read how, later in her life, when she had an abscess on her hand which the doctor cut and probed with the surgical severity of the the times, she neither moved nor uttered a sound. "It is an excellent thing to be holy," said the physician, who regarded her as a saint, "since it makes you insensible to pain." Constant attacks of fever and prostration kept her from leading the ordinary community life; but not content with these sufferings imposed on her directly by the hand of God, she added to them in every way that she could devise which was consistent with obedience. She mingled ashes with her food, and though pursued by a continual and unquenchable thirst, she abstained from drinking for days together. Planks, sticks, and even broken tiles were her bed.

But the most exacting of her tyrants was the third, the love of Jesus Christ. Of her devotion in receiving Communion, it is enough to say that of all her great sufferings none equalled that of being deprived of it. Her own expression was that she would joyfully walk through the flames to receive it. In prayer all her faculties were fixed on our Lord: the least look, the

slightest momentary distraction, even a change of posture were wept and bewailed by her as terrible sins. But beyond and above this faithfulness in the worship of her Master, there grew on her states of supernatural absorption in prayer, when she no longer had the will or even the power to move, or to divert her mind from its one supreme object. For hours, sometimes for the whole night through, she remained on her knees without sign or movement, oblivious to all sensation and every sight and sound, save only to the voice of obedience. We are told of the experiments tried on her by her companions, and of how, for instance, one night when she was in this state, a sister gave her a message from the superior to go and warm herself. Immediately alert, she rose and stood by the fire for a quarter of an hour, and then tranquilly returning to the chapel, she fell back into her state of absorption. This supernatural prayer, instead of convincing the community that they had in their midst one highly favoured by God, increased the suspicion with which they regarded her. They could not explain to their satisfaction how one whose health was so weak as to preclude her from following the most ordinary community exercises, should be able to remain motionless on her knees for hours together, and because they could not explain it they made up their minds that her mysterious illnesses were hysterical, and that her devotion was certainly the work of delusion, and possibly of the devil. The point that most aggravated them was that their superior should be, as they considered, the dupe of this visionary. It was indeed a fact that severely as Mother de Saumaise tested Blessed Margaret's spiritual life, and unremitting as she was in her endeavours to humiliate and mortify her, the conviction had forced itself on her that her supernatural life came from God alone. It was our Lord's blessed will to give His servant this wise and gifted superior to be her guide and confidante at this critical time; for the hour was rapidly approaching when He was going to reveal His secrets to His chosen spouse.

It was barely a year after Blessed Margaret's profession that she received the first revelation of the Sacred Heart, which, with the two that followed it, was

to make such a deep impression on the devotion of succeeding ages. Nearly four hundred years before, it had been made known to St. Gertrude that the revelation of this devotion was reserved for a later time, when the charity of men would have grown cold. This period in the world's history had now come. With heresy and schism rampant, tainting what they could not destroy; with coldness and half-heartedness chilling spiritual life within the Church, the time might well be considered ripe for this revelation of our Lord's love, intended to rally round Him those who were still on His side.

The account of the revelation vouchsafed to the humble and obscure nun of the Visitation can best be described in her own words. "One day (this was on the 27th of December, 1673), being before the Blessed Sacrament, and having the time, I felt myself possessed by the divine presence so powerfully that I forgot myself and the place where I was, and gave myself over to the Divine Spirit, yielding my heart to His love." Having thus begun, she describes how, as she knelt at the grille, our Blessed Lord appeared to her, with the wound in His sacred side visible, and therein His Divine Heart more brilliant than the sun, and transparent as crystal; and having related how He made her lay her head on His breast, where once before the beloved disciple laid his, she thus continued: "He then made known to me the marvels of His love, and the unutterable secrets of His Sacred Heart, which hitherto He had kept hidden from me, and which He now revealed to me for the first time. This is what as it seems to me, took place; our Lord said to me, 'My Heart is so possessed by love for men, that being unable to contain within itself the fire of its burning love, it must diffuse itself by thy means. I have chosen thee, an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance to accomplish this great thing, so that all may know that it is I Myself who do it.'" Then her Divine Master took her heart from her, and having placed it within His own, all burning with love, He returned it to her; and ever after the pain she suffered from the invisible wound in her side was so intense that she could hardly bear it.

This revelation was unlike anything she had received

before, and she was as one beside herself for a time. Her companions, alarmed at the almost demented state she was in, led or dragged her to Mother de Saumaise, in whose private ear she recounted what had occurred, though making known the secrets she had heard was a very torture to her.

Mother de Saumaise, perplexed and troubled, commanded the servant of God to write an account of the revelation she professed to have received. She had indeed issued the same command on the occasion of previous visions; but what was then committed to paper has been lost to us, for Blessed Margaret's shrinking dread of publicity made her burn what she had written as soon as her superior had seen it. The account of her later revelations has fortunately been preserved to us and goes by the name of her Memoir. Its opening words betray how deep was the writer's horror of committing to paper the secrets of God. "Only for love of Thee," she says, "do I submit to write these pages, being called thereto by obedience. I ask Thy pardon for the resistance I have made; but as Thou alone knowest the repugnance I feel, so also is it Thou alone who canst give me the strength to overcome it. I receive this command as if it came from Thee, hoping thereby to make satisfaction for the too great care I have always taken to indulge my longing to be lost in oblivion. O my Sovereign Good, may I write nothing except for Thy greater glory and my own confusion!"

So shattering were the effects of the apparition on her frail body, and so acute was the agony in her side, that for months Margaret was supposed to be dying. It was not till the summer of 1674 that she was able to resume her place in the chapel; and there on a certain day, the exact date of which is unknown, she received the second revelation. "Once more," she writes, trying to describe what happened, "my sweet Master Jesus Christ appeared to me. His Divine Heart was like a glowing furnace." Again He revealed to her the love of His Heart for men, and how it was wounded by their ingratitude, and especially by their cold treatment of Him in the Blessed Sacrament. "If

they would but return love for love," were His words to His servant, "I would count as nothing what I endured for them." He then desired that she, at least, should do all she could to make reparation for the ingratitude of men, and commanded her for that end to receive Communion on the first Friday of every month, and to watch with Him, prostrate on the ground, every Thursday night, in memory of His Passion, promising to make her then participate in that mortal sadness which He suffered in the Garden of Gethsemani.

Again, as on the previous occasion, like one beside herself, and scarcely able to move, she was almost carried to Mother de Saumaise. The superior received this second communication with much reserve, and allowed the servant of God to practice the two devotions revealed, only on condition that she asked for and obtained a sufficient recovery of health to enable her to follow the rule. Even the granting of this sign did not carry conviction to her mind. Afraid to trust her own judgment, and thoroughly perplexed as to what course she ought to pursue, Mother de Saumaise laid the whole matter before certain religious, selected from the monasteries in the neighbourhood. These, having formed themselves into a sort of court, called Blessed Margaret before them to give an account of what had occurred. For some end of His own, God allowed these men, chosen for their wisdom and holiness, to come to the unanimous conclusion that the whole thing was either delusion or deception, and that the sooner it was put a stop to the better. They therefore dismissed Margaret with a somewhat sneering injunction to go back and eat her dinner like an ordinary mortal!

She who knew so well that she was the victim of no delusion might now have failed in courage to carry out her Divine Master's purpose, had not He condescended to her weakness, and commanded her secretly to await the coming of one whom He was about to send to her aid.

The holy Jesuit, the venerable Father de la Colombière, whose name is so associated with the beginnings of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, was at this juncture sent to Paray, and among his other duties was appointed to give a retreat to the nuns of the Visita-

tion. As he first opened his lips to speak, it was revealed to Blessed Margaret that it was he whom God had sent to help her. However, she waited God's time, and it was not till Easter, when he was appointed confessor extraordinary to the convent, that she moved in the matter, and even then not of her own accord.

Mother de Saumaise, dissatisfied with the decision arrived at by her advisers, hailed the presence of the holy Jesuit to set her doubts at rest; and laid the whole matter of the revelations before him. And he, having asked an interview in the parlour with the chosen spouse of Christ, and heard the story from her own lips, was moved to believe that the message delivered to her had been sent by God indeed.

As may be imagined, the support of this counsellor sent by our Lord to His servant only tended to strengthen the ill-feeling entertained against her in the convent, and the indignation aroused in the hearts of her companions, by her so-called affectation of singularity. Nor did they spare the priest in their criticisms, blaming both him and their superior, the one for his credulity, and the other for her favouritism. While some in their displeasure declared that the obnoxious sister needed a doctor more than spiritual advice, others went so far as to say that it was rather a case for holy water; and a most unedifying spirit of contention and rivalry reigned in the convent.

Father de la Colombière was still at Paray when Blessed Margaret received the third and most important revelation of the Sacred Heart, one day in the octave of Corpus Christi, 1675. Our Lord appeared to His servant as before, and having again revealed to her His love for men, and His desire for reparation on their part, He added that it was His wish to have a special feast observed in honour of His Sacred Heart, on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi; and that she was to be His instrument for that end. This time Margaret felt no terror, nor did she fall into the alarming state which had overpowered her on the previous occasions. "But, my Lord," she protested in her humility, "to whom dost Thou speak? To a creature so despicable, and so miserable a sinner that

her unworthiness will but hinder the accomplishment of Thy designs" "What!" was the reply vouchsafed by her Divine Master, "Knowest thou not that I make use of the weak to confound the wise?" "But," she persisted, "give me at least the means to do what Thou commandest." "Go," said our Blessed Lord, "go and tell My servant to exert himself to establish this devotion, and thus to give pleasure to My Heart."

She faithfully recounted everything to Father de la Colombière, who was once more moved to believe that the message came from God; and, together with Blessed Margaret, solemnly consecrated himself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the very day named by Him to be kept in its honour.

God saw fit to allow His servant the aid and support of this holy priest for a very short time. In 1676 he was sent away to England as chaplain to the Duchess of York, wife of our future James II. So promptly did the holy Jesuit obey the call that he had no time to take leave of Margaret, or give her any parting counsels, beyond a few hurriedly written lines in which he bade her leave all to God. For a moment her gentle heart quailed at the prospect of the solitary and unequal struggle against incredulity which lay before her; but a secret voice spoke to her: "Is not God enough?" and her spirit rose once more.

But a further and severe trial awaited the servant of God. The six years of the superiorship of Mother de Saumaise had expired, and she lost this wise cool-headed friend, in whose soul the devotion of the Sacred Heart had already struck a sympathetic chord. Her successor, Mother Greyfié, late superior at Annecy, was an altogether different person. Her very chief characteristics, her austerity and her almost blind devotion to the rule, formed a great contrast with the gentleness and breadth which marked the government of Mother de Saumaise. The incomer took the reins of office with the fixed purpose of sifting to the bottom this devotion, which by no means appealed to her soul, and of thoroughly testing the character of the sister who had proved such a subject of contention in the convent of Paray. So severe indeed was she towards the servant

of God that before her death she saw fit to express publicly her regret for having, as she expressed it, "too freely indulged the appetite which the humble Margaret had for mortifications and humiliations." The community no longer had any shadow of excuse for complaining of favouritism shown towards their companion: though, for all that, the new superior found that the healing of the divisions in the convent was no easy task.

After having heard from Margaret's lips the simple narrative of all there was to tell, the immediate action of Mother Greyfié was to pay absolutely no attention to what she had heard, to make no account of the sufferings of the humble sister, and to reduce her life to the exact level of those around her. No humiliations, no exactions of obedience, were too great to satisfy Margaret's thirst for suffering; though it made the hearts bleed of even those who did not like her to see her dragging herself about in unbearable agony, a raging fever consuming her. As during her noviciate, she was in spite of her sufferings, moved from one arduous post to another, however uncongenial or unsuited to her physical state it might be.

Each month seemed to increase her sufferings, which were one by one taken hold of, as it were, by our Lord, and conformed into a likeness of His own. "Receive, daughter, this cross," said He to her on one occasion. "I give it thee to place on thy heart, to have it always before thee, and to bear ever in thine arms. It will make thee feel great torment, unheard of and unceasing." The invisible wound in her side gave her excruciating agony, especially on Fridays; while a terrible injury she received in the head from the handle of the well, which escaped from her feeble grasp, was sanctified to her as she lay fainting on the ground, by a vision in which our Lord placed a crown of thorns on her brow; and ever after it seemed as if her head were on fire with pain. So too, when, burning with fever and unquenchable thirst, she would have shifted her weary position, the voice of her Master stopped her by reminding her that when He was on the Cross He had not moved from one side to the other.

She joyfully endured all this agony, together with all the aggravation of it entailed by her new superior's

rule. But when Mother Greyfié, further to mortify her, forbade her to practise the devotions in honour of the Sacred Heart, commanded by her Divine Master, she turned to Him for aid in her dilemma: nor was He slow to give it. Angry at the long resistance to His wishes, as well as at the spirit of discord and want of charity that reigned in the community, He suffered a much-loved young sister to die unexpectedly. Through His servant He announced to Mother Greyfié that this trial was sent as a judgment on the convent, and as a token of His displeasure. By God's grace the message found credence with the superior, and she restored the suspended permissions. Probably, in spite of her prejudices, there was growing within her a conviction that what she was fighting against might not, after all, be the work of delusion. As a test she commanded the humble servant of God to ask for a complete restoration to health for five months. The immediate granting of the petition, and furthermore the return of Margaret's former state of pain and prostration the very hour that the five months expired, did much to strengthen Mother Greyfié's growing convictions, though it in no way affected her system of treatment.

Perhaps to Margaret's humble and diffident soul the worst suffering was caused by a misgiving that those who condemned her conduct and derided her supernatural communications might be right, and that she was, though ignorantly, acting under a delusion. When she laid this dread before our Blessed Lord, He gave her for her consolation three marks by which she might know that these favours came from Him. 1. They would always be accompanied by some humiliation on the part of others. 2. After receiving them she would be plunged in a sense of confusion and her own nothingness. 3. They would never cause in her, even in the slightest degree, any feeling of contempt towards others. Moreover, the fruit of these supernatural visitations would be love for Him, obedience to Him, obedience to His example, love of suffering and a willingness to suffer unperceived, and, finally, a great desire for Communion.

It was God's will that Blessed Margaret and the holy

priest whom He had raised up to help her should meet once more on earth. Father de la Colombière had passed three years at the court of the Duchess of York, leading the life of a religious, neither visiting nor being visited; when he was denounced in the vile Titus Oates plot. Though, thanks to his nationality, his life could not be taken directly, he was thrown into prison, and finally sent back to France so broken down in health by the hardships he had undergone, that he only lived a brief time after his return.

It was thought that the fine climate of Paray would suit him; and there he stayed till the end, seeing much of Mother Greyfié, and next to nothing of Blessed Margaret, thus showing how little there was that was human in their intercourse. "I saw her but once," he wrote to Mother de Saumaise, "but that once afforded me much consolation; for I found her extremely humble and submissive, with a great love of the Cross and a desire to be despised. Now these are marks which never deceive, and show by what spirit she is led."

The holy Jesuit lived six months at Paray, saying Mass when he could at the altar where our Lord had made His revelations, of the secret of which he was almost the sole guardian. His doctors would have sent him elsewhere, but Blessed Margaret made known to him that it was God's will that he should die at Paray. There he stayed, and there on the 15th of February, 1682, he breathed forth his soul.

Father de la Colombière's words had had great weight with Mother Greyfié; and though she continued to the end the same course of severe repression that she had always maintained in her dealings with the servant of God, she could no longer be counted among those who despised the revelations vouchsafed to her.

With the end of Mother Greyfié's superiorship ended also those humiliations so dear to Margaret on account of the sufferings they entailed. So precious indeed were they to her, that she loved the hand that inflicted them, and to the end cherished a special affection for her harsh superior. With the appointment of Mother Melin as her successor, a new phase began in Blessed Margaret's life; and during the years that remained

to her she was suffered to spread quietly the devotion committed to her keeping, diffusing around her the graces which had been poured into her soul ever since her childhood

Mother Melin belonged to the community of Paray, and had been from the first, in spite of public opinion, inclined to believe in the sanctity of the servant of God. Desirous of proving the great confidence she had in her, almost her first action was to appoint her to the important post of mistress of novices. With this began a trial of a new sort for the humble Margaret—a trial which the world would not have recognized as such, but the intensity of which was known only to God and herself. To her who declared that nothing but suffering made life endurable, these tokens of favour, added to the veneration in which she was speedily held by the novices, caused her more acute pain than could have done any humiliation.

Eight novices were under her direction, two of whom, Peronne des Farges and Rosalie Verchère must be mentioned by name. In their arms did she die, as she had herself foretold to them, and to their devotion and care in treasuring every word she uttered or committed to paper, do we owe most of our knowledge of the secrets of Blessed Margaret's interior life. All her rule was love—the love of God and the love of man; and so often was this theme on her lips that the novices likened her to St. John. The humble sister's reserve melted under the influence of the companionship and veneration of these fervent young souls; and, while professing to be passing on to them the maxims of their saintly founders, she poured into the hearts of her hearers the devotion which she had learned from our Lord Himself, and with burning words exhorted them to humility, love of suffering, and self-forgetfulness. The novices were quick to perceive that they were receiving no ordinary instructions, and by complaining of their want of memory for verbal teaching persuaded her to write them down; and to this pious fraud we owe many precious fragments.

The shrewd suspicion of her young disciples that her fervid exhortations had been gathered from no mere

books, was confirmed by the reading in the refectory of Father de la Colombière's published notes of retreats, in which, without mentioning any names, he described the revelations received in the chapel at Paray. The secret was out! And, unknown to Margaret, the novices, school-children, and lay-sisters learnt to regard her as a saint, and even kept as relics things she had used, attributing to them miraculous power.

Meanwhile, in the midst of her new labours and responsibilities, her Divine Master pursued her with His favours even as He had done in the days of her humiliation. Again and again did He reveal and impress on her the secrets of His Sacred Heart, His burning love for men, His desire for reparation, and His sweet promises to those who would honour Him in the way He wished to be honoured. Ever near His spouse, and manifest to her, He directed her in her new duties, so opposed to her retiring love of a hidden life; and endued her with unforeseen wisdom and a wonderful discernment of spirits in her guidance of the novices, even enabling her to read their secret thoughts. She unerringly detected false from true vocations; and on more than one occasion, persisting calmly in spite of the ill-feeling it aroused, she stopped the profession of those who, as it was afterwards discovered, had embraced the religious life either from hypocrisy or under coercion.

In the meantime, the confidence reposed in Blessed Margaret, and the spiritual progress of those under her direction had in no way abated the suspicion with which she was regarded by the older portion of the nuns. A latent spirit of ill-will against her smouldered, ready to burst into a flame at the slightest provocation. Such provocation was given by the indiscreet zeal of some of the novices.

Reading Blessed Margaret's thoughts, these young creatures felt sure that they could give her no greater pleasure than by showing devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Therefore, on her feast, they, with the sanction of Mother Melin, prepared as a surprise an altar, on which was enthroned a representation of this mystery. Feeling as if at last her hopes of the adoption

by the community of the devotion were about to be fulfilled, the servant of God threw herself on her knees and with the novices consecrated herself to the Heart of Jesus. Not content with this, Sisters Peronne and Rosalie ran off, and enthusiastically besought the older professed sisters to join in this act of consecration.

There was one nun in the convent, Sister Mary Magdalen Des Escures, who held a position of paramount influence over her companions, to which was mainly attributable the hostility towards Margaret and the devotion she wished to promote. The ardent pleading of the two novices kindled into open flame every latent feeling of indignation and antipathy in her soul. She sent back a scathing message to the mistress of novices, and neither she nor the superior were spared in the remarks of the community. Mother Melin, alarmed at the storm she had raised by her sanction of the novices' scheme, bade Margaret for the future to keep the devotion to herself. For a moment the heart of the servant of God failed her, and she owned in a letter to Mother Greyfié, then superior at Sémur, that she was tempted for a time to give up all efforts to carry out further her Lord's commands.

It was from the most unexpected quarter that she received support and sympathy. Mother Greyfié and Mother de Saumaise, then superior at Dijon, were moved to adopt and promote the devotion to the Sacred Heart which, when at Paray, they had done their best to crush. With these two Blessed Margaret kept up an intimate correspondence, still extant, and was able to do through them what she was powerless to do by herself. Mother Greyfié was the first to have a picture of the Sacred Heart painted, and of this picture she sent, first etchings and ultimately engravings to Margaret to distribute, as a practical method of diffusing the devotion. Mother Greyfié also it was who, most likely as an act of reparation for her former stubborn resistance, first consecrated herself and all her community to the Sacred Heart.

This action of hers had wider effects than she had anticipated. Next to the rule, Sister des Escures held Mother Greyfié in most veneration, as being

its living exponent. Her public act of consecration not only shook her resistance but shattered it completely. As a generous act of reparation for the past, she herself proposed that the Convent of Paray should follow the example of that of Sémur, and begged as a favour that she might have charge of a chapel to be erected in the garden in honour of the Sacred Heart. Thus was the devotion established where it had been revealed, and Margaret might have now sung her *Nunc dimittis*, though it was God's will that she should live to see the devotion sanctioned by the Bishop of the diocese, and leave given by him to say a Mass of the Sacred Heart.

With the dawn of 1690 Blessed Margaret expressed the conviction that the time had come for her to die. The reason that she gave was that she now suffered nothing; and to her, life under those conditions was an impossibility. "I count every hour without suffering as lost to me," she writes to Mother Greyfié. "I only desire to live so that I may have the joy of suffering. . . . To love, to suffer for love's sake, and be still, is the secret of those who love the Well-beloved. . . . . Ask the Sacred Heart to grant me the grace to die with Him on the Cross, poor, unknown, despised and forgotten; weighed down with every suffering, provided only that it be of His choosing and not mine. . . . . I have no desire for any consolation except that of having none; and to live entirely hidden in Jesus Christ, my suffering unknown to all."

In fact the object of her life was accomplished as far as it lay with her to accomplish it: and it was her belief that her sojourn on earth was an obstacle rather than the contrary to the further spread of the devotion. This was indeed the case, for her love of the hidden life was so inveterate that it was only after her death that anyone dared to thwart it and make known the details of the revelations. The desire to be unknown had grown into a very passion. Even the dearest wish of her heart, the spread of the devotion entrusted to her, yielded to it, and it needed the voice of obedience to make her open her lips on the subject.

On the 22nd of July she began a forty days' retreat,

with the ostensible object of preparing her soul for death, though all who knew her considered her to be in a comparatively good state of health. She, however, knew that the end of her earthly pilgrimage was at hand, and her heart expanded with joy at the prospect of death; at which joy she wondered, for her humility made her honestly consider herself the very worst of sinners.

In October, the time for the annual community retreat arrived, and she prepared to enter on it; but a slight attack of fever seized her, and she gave it up, saying quietly that she would make the great retreat instead, words the signification of which her companions refused to understand. The doctor who had attended her for years and held her in the utmost veneration, declared that there was no cause for alarm. "Very well," she said with a smile, "So be it; but it is better that a secular should make a false statement than a religious."

The fever increased, and on the 16th of October she asked to receive Viaticum; which request, on account of the doctor's verdict, was refused. She submitted quietly and gently: but, as she was still fasting, she asked to receive Communion; which was brought to her. Silently and secretly she received it in Viaticum, knowing that the end was at hand.

Her sufferings were great enough to satisfy her craving for them. "I burn, I burn!" she exclaimed, while wrung with pain. "Alas! would that it were with divine love; but I never have loved my God perfectly!"

Even next day, on the 17th, in spite of what she said, the sisters waiting on her refused to believe that she was dying; till at seven o'clock in the evening she suddenly collapsed. With all speed, the community was summoned, and a priest fetched. He arrived in time to give her Extreme Unction; but just as he finished the last anointing she gently closed her eyes in death, to open them in the Presence of Him whom even she had hitherto seen only under a veil.

The Ven. John Thules, Martyr.

BY THE VERY REV. MGR. GRADWELL.

Introduction.

It is now many years ago that I was in the company of the Rev. James Swarbrick, who was so well known in North Lancashire as the respected priest of Thurnham, and who is still honoured in his well earned retirement. He told me the following anecdote. He had been a student of the English College, Rome, under the Rectorship of Dr. Grant, who afterwards, as everybody knows, became the saintly Bishop of Southwark. They were seated in an arbour in a vineyard belonging to the College, at a short distance from the city. Under the warm Italian sun the genial Rector was chatting familiarly with the students. The conversation turned on the state of religion in England, and Dr. Grant observed to Mr. Swarbrick, "You make a great noise about the Catholics of Lancashire, but you have got no saints." The young man was silenced; he had never heard of a Lancashire saint, and so had no answer to make. So far the story. It struck me much at the time, and it has been my constant endeavour since to wipe away the reproach, and to show that Lancashire

has many saintly memories connected with it. I diligently ransacked the ancient history of our county, and I must confess that my researches at first bore little fruit, but as time went on I was rewarded for my perseverance; in the darkest times and in the most obscure periods I came upon the tracks of great servants of God; of saints whose names shine brightly in the Church's calendar. I need not here recount how by degrees I ascertained how the great Light of the West, St. Patrick, had left indelible marks of his presence in the county, on the shores of Morcambe, and in the cities of Manchester and Liverpool; how St. Kentigern traversed the county from end to end, sowing everywhere on his route the good seed of the Gospel; how St. Paulinus preached in Burnley and at Whalley; how St. Elphin laboured as pastor of souls at Warrington, and St. Oswald sanctified Winwick with his holy life and glorious death. Then I learned that in the ninth century the monks of Lindisfarne, with their bishop at their head, sought a refuge in Lancashire for their great treasure, the incorrupt body of St. Cuthbert, and left at Hallsall, Lytham, and Upper Kellet, as well as in many other places, evidences of their stay, in the churches still bearing the name of St. Cuthbert.

Still it remained true that I had met with no saint who was born in Lancashire and who was a real Lancashire man. But the action of our Holy Father Leo XIII., in declaring venerable the martyrs who testified with their blood to the truths of the Catholic faith in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and her successors has removed this objection. For Lancashire has been the fruitful mother of many martyrs, of whom some have shed their blood in far-off places, in London and the Isle of Wight, in York, or Chester; but many besides, who, as they drew their first breath in Lancashire, so also poured out the last drop of their blood on her soil. Their memory has scarcely been honoured as it ought; their patient endurance and heroic virtues are little known; nay, even their names sound strange in the ears of the men of to-day. And yet there is no reason why

we should not cherish them with veneration and love. Surely if a Romano-Briton at Verulam won imperishable renown for entertaining and sheltering a priest in the persecution of Diocletian, and gave his name to a city and an abbey church, so that St. Alban's is known wherever the English language is spoken, a precisely similar deed done in Lancashire in Queen Elizabeth's days should not be passed by with utter indifference.

The following pages are a humble effort to honour the memory of one of these glorious Lancashire martyrs. The township in which he was born has in these later years been selected as offering an advantageous site for the ecclesiastical seminary of the diocese; and it is only natural that the students of St. Joseph's College, Upholland, should wish to know something about the illustrious native of their township. Dr. Challoner tells us something about him, but it was manifestly desirable that his narrative should be expanded, and that circumstances of both time and place should be set forth in fuller details than Dr. Challoner's plan admitted of. It is then to the superiors and students of St. Joseph's College that this memoir of the Venerable John Thules is humbly offered, with the hope that it may help to foster in their hearts a genuine love and admiration of their martyr, and an eager desire to imitate his constancy under trials, and his fidelity to the cause of God and His Church.

I.

His Family and Boyhood.

At a distance of about four miles from Wigan, in a westerly direction, stands the picturesque village of Upholland, now well known in the north of England as the seat of the ecclesiastical seminary of the Liverpool diocese. Here, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, resided a family named Thules. In our now

happily voluminous literature about Lancashire families the name Thules does not occur except in connection with the subject of this narrative. Mr. Joseph Gillow, who is perhaps the highest living authority on this matter, writes to me that, after having looked over all the lists of Lancashire wills, &c., besides the whole of the Harleian Society's publications of visitations of various counties, he could find no name that could have been corrupted into Thules. The name however apparently still survives; for in the list of magistrates for the County Palatine is a Mr. Thules living near Warrington. But this and the existence of a street in St. Helens called Thules Street are the only traces of the family that I can find.

It was in the year of our Lord 1568 and the eleventh of Queen Elizabeth—a year memorable for the Catholic Church in England, for in it was founded the famous College of Douay—that the Venerable John Thules was born. The family had remained faithful to the old religion, midst all the difficulties which attached to its profession. They had beheld with dismay the succession of laws which had abolished the old Faith, and substituted for it a Parliament-made religion. They had seen the Mass said for the last time in their parish church, on the eve of St. John, in 1559, and the Common Prayer set up in its stead. They had experienced the harsh laws which made compulsory, under fine and imprisonment, attendance at the false worship. They had seen their priests driven from their altars, or, what was still more painful, go with the times and comform to the law, either for fear of worldly loss, or because they embraced the new doctrine. But they remained faithful, and clung to their dear Catholic Church with all the greater tenacity and love. They had a son named Christopher, who in due time became a priest and suffered imprisonment for the Faith in the Gatehouse, Westminster; and some years later another son—John—the subject of this narrative. A third priest of the name, Robert Thules, was educated at the English Colleges at Seville and Valladolid; he was

ordained at the latter place, and thence returned to England. He died in 1602. Probably he was a brother of Christopher and John.

The Thuleses must have been in fairly good circumstances or they could not have educated so many sons for the priesthood; but even so, the education of their children could have been no easy task. There were no Catholic schools tolerated by the law; to keep a tutor in the house was forbidden by heavy penalties. Of course the boys never heard Mass in a church until they left home, and they had to pick up knowledge both of books and religion either from their parents' teaching or from such priests or lay teachers as found their way into the village. If parents dared to send their children abroad to be trained in a college beyond the seas, new penalties both of fine and imprisonment were incurred. But none of these difficulties daunted the brave parents of Christopher and John Thules.

When the younger son was nine years old, the elder was sent to Douay; he arrived there on the 1st of June, 1577, in company with a Mr. Hole and Mr. Allen, an Irishman, a student of medicine. On the same day Mr. Horton, Walter Hawkesworth, and George Haddock returned from England, and were admitted to Commons, in the College. Hawkesworth is a name that frequently recurs in the diaries of the Rheims and Roman Colleges about this time. No fewer than five different individuals are mentioned, but none of these became priests. As Cardinal Allen's mother was a Lister, and her sister Rosamond had married William Hawkesworth, their son William was his cousin, and the affectionate Cardinal in his letters shows considerable interest in his relative. It is to be feared that he was disappointed in his hopes, for his cousin William left Rheims for England without being ordained. Walter remained at Rheims only a few months and then left for France.

Of a very different stamp was George Haydock, for so the name is now generally spelt. He, too, was a connection of Dr. Allen, for his father, Vivian, and the

future Cardinal's brother, had married two sisters, Ellen and Elizabeth Westby. He was born about the year 1557, in the reign of Queen Mary, and was twenty years old on his arrival at Douay. And if it be the case that the Thuleses were related to the Ashtons, they would also be distantly connected with the Haydocks, as in the third year of the reign of Henry VI., 1455, Richard Haydock, of Cottam Hall, had married Eleanor, the daughter of Sir William Ashton, of Croston. It is not the place here to pursue further the history of George Haydock, suffice it to say that on January 16, 1582, he left Rheims for England, that in London he sought hospitality from the son of one of his father's tenants at Hollowforth, who unknown to George had given up his Faith, and who betrayed him to the government agents; that after an imprisonment of more than usual hardship he was executed at Tyburn, with every circumstance of exceptional cruelty, February 12, 1584, aged 27 years. I would fain linger over the touching, and most edifying incidents of the life of this friend and school companion of Christopher Thules, but the digression would lead me too far away from my immediate subject. I say so much in order that my narrative may not be a list of names, and that my readers may the better realize the terrible nature of the times when a student's companions were, like himself, preparing themselves for a bloody butchery under that cruel woman whom many Protestants glorify as the Virgin Queen.

The College was removed from Douay to Rheims in 1578 and it seems that Christopher only stayed one year at Rheims. On the 16th of February, 1579, he set out for Rome in company of six others, of whom the College Diary says—"They went partly out of devotion and partly for the sake of their studies." In those days it was a difficult matter for private persons to carry on correspondence with friends or relatives at a distance, for there was no regular post worked by government officials for the use of the public, and hence the Thuleses would have to rely upon friends who might be travelling between England and Rheims or Rome, for

sending and receiving letters. But the memory of his brother's departure for college, and the conversations he had with his parents about his high aims, awakened in John's heart the desire to be a priest, and he longed for the time when he too might cross the seas and commence his studies for the ecclesiastical state.

We cannot too much admire the faith and devotion of Catholic parents who, in the early years of Queen Elizabeth fostered in the hearts of their children the vocation to the priesthood. Nothing but a sublime love of God, of souls, and of their country, could have inspired in their own minds so hazardous and dangerous a project. They were choosing for their sons a life of constant privation, hardship, and danger; they were encouraging them in a career which could bring them neither wealth, nor ease, nor honour, but shut them out from all the ordinary pursuits of life. From the time that their boys left their homes, they would have to renounce all the sweet happiness of family life, to spend years of exile from their native land, to return to England only at their imminent peril, and after leading for years the lives of hunted wild beasts, to take their chance of ending their days in a loathsome prison or on a shameful scaffold. But in Lancashire there were many parents who with their eyes open chose this life for their sons; and there were brave high-spirited boys who longed to devote themselves to the cause of God, and whose hearts beat exultantly when they were told that they were to go to college. It is the fashion to talk about the bold adventurers of Elizabeth's reign. The names of Drake, of Raleigh, and of Hawkins, are in everybody's mouth. But it required more real courage, more sustained fortitude for a youth in dread Elizabeth's days to aspire to the priesthood than to brave the storm of the Atlantic or to board the lofty decks of a Spanish galleon. And, thanks to the watchful providence of God, there were scattered throughout Lancashire in those terrible times, in lowly farmsteads or picturesque villages, in the cottages of the peasant or the mansions of the well-to-do, sturdy Catholic families who were faithful to the Church,

and who thought it a joy and a privilege to offer their sons to the service of her altars.

The fierce temper of Elizabeth and the cool craft of Cecil were balked by the calm resolution of Lancashire squires and farmers. Even in this nineteenth century we are reaping the fruits of that unconquerable heroism of our forefathers, for it was nothing less; and the Catholic Faith keeps its hold, which it never lost during three centuries of gloom and trial, on out-of-the-way hillsides and lonely valleys and broad spreading plains in our county. But is the old desire to devote our children to the priesthood equally prevalent amongst us? Do mothers still cherish the hope and desire that the infants they are nursing on their knees should one day become the priests of God? Do fathers watch the growing intelligence of their boys and wish to offer to the sanctuary the brightest of them? In Elizabeth's time, Goosnargh sent to Rheims her Marsden and her Beesley, Cottam its Haydock, Winwick its Arrowsmith, and Ashton its Gerards: and Upholland numbered among the Church's priests and martyrs its Christopher and John Thules. In after times the Pleasingtons, and the Brockhole in two generations, kept up the sacred tradition, and early in the present century Haydocks, Gillows, and Smiths, Barrows and Lunds, Gradwells and Browns have sent their most promising sons to Douay and Ushaw. May the fathers and mothers of this generation be moved to emulate the piety and zeal of those who have gone before them; for on them in great measure depends the conversion of our country.

II.

His Companions on his Arrival at Rheims, 1583.

Before leaving home, John had made considerable progress in his studies, and even acquired a fair know-

ledge of Latin. At length, in the year 1583, the long desire of his heart was satisfied, and he learnt that arrangements were in train for his leaving Upholland and going to the Continent. He was a bold, high-spirited boy, easily roused to indignation and anger, though in later life he became so thoroughly master over himself, and kept his feelings under such complete control, as to extort the reluctant praise of his bitterest enemies. Of course everything had to be conducted with the strictest secrecy. No conspirator conveying daggers for the murder of a political opponent took more elaborate precautions against the discovery of their designs than did the worthy parents of our future martyr. An escort had to be provided to conduct him to a port from which he could take ship for the shores of France; and it says much for the widely spread sympathy for the persecuted Catholics, that so many lads succeeded in making the long and difficult journey in spite of the many persons who must have known, or at least suspected, their plans.

It was on the 28th of May, 1583, when John was fifteen years old, that he reached the college at Rheims and was received under its hospitable roof. He arrived in company of six others, and we may conjecture that he had made the last portion of his journey from the coast to Rheims along with some of them. The names of his companions are given in the Douay Diary—Gilbert Gerarde, Wm. Tomson, James Nightingale, Dom Thos. Brome, Hugh Aspinwall, and —Hamley. From their names it is probable enough that some of them had travelled with him from Lancashire. A few words about them may be both interesting and useful, and inform us of the varied character of the party which found itself at the gates of the college at Rheims. Apparently the eldest member of the party was D. Thomas Brome. In the Douay Diary, D. stands for Dominus, the title then given to a priest, and we may reasonably suppose that the person so styled was the Rev. Thomas Brome. In the Diary under the date March 1, 1584, the year

following the arrival in Rheims, a John Brome, of the diocese of Hereford, received the tonsure, the four minor orders, and the sub-diaconate, and in the December following he was ordained priest. So it is not unlikely that Mr. Brome had come to Rheims to see a relative of his who was preparing for the priesthood.

James Nightingale belonged to the diocese of York. He must have been already far advanced in his studies, for he, too, was ordained priest in the March of the following year, and sent to England in August.

Of Hugh Aspinwall there is little to say. He was a native of the diocese of Chester, which at that time included Lancashire. He died at Rheims in 1586, after being four years at college, and was at the time a student in theology.

As to the fourth of the party, Mr. Hamley, there is some doubt. Probably he is the same as the John Hamley of the diocese of Exeter, who received the tonsure and minor orders along with John Brome and James Nightingale, as already mentioned, and, who, going into England in 1585, died a martyr's death. He is mentioned by Challoner, who says there is some uncertainty about the place and date of his execution.

We now come to William Tomson, a person of some interest to us. He was born in Blackburn parish. He too had arrived at man's estate, and was so far advanced in his education that he was ordained priest in the following year, 1584, at the same time as the Venerable William Marsden and Robert Anderton, the illustrious martyrs of the Isle of Wight. He returned to England the same year, laboured diligently for a brief time in the care of souls, and in 1586 was tried and condemned on the charge of being a priest and remaining in England contrary to the statute. On April 20, of that year, he was, along with another priest, the venerable Richard Sergeant, drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn, where he happily finished his course. He was hanged, bowelled, and quartered. The news of his glorious

confession of the Faith reached Rheims in the June of 1586, along with that of the martyrdom of William Marsden and Robert Anderton. In the Douay Diary he is marked M. 50, being the fiftieth martyr then recorded.

It remains only to speak of the last of Thules's companions on his journey. This was Gilbert Gerarde, who was the youngest of the travellers, being only fourteen years old, a year younger than John himself. He had two older brothers, priests, and they are styled "Cestrenses" in the Diary, as they belonged to the diocese of Chester, and were probably Lancashire born. His brother, Alexander, had arrived at Rheims, from Douay, August 15, 1581, two years previously; he was still at the college in 1583, remaining there till he was ordained priest in 1586. He was sent to England on the mission on the 2nd of January, 1587. Later on we read that he was a prisoner for the Faith in Wisbech Castle, along with his brother Thomas, also a priest. Of Gilbert it is sufficient to say that he received the tonsure on September 23, 1583; that in 1584 he was sent to Verdun; that he went to Rome in 1587, and that he returned to Rheims a priest in 1590, having left Rome on account of his health. After labouring many years on the English mission, he is said to have entered the Society of Jesus, though of this there is no written record extant, and we find him, in the memorable year 1605, along with Father Garnett at White Webbs.

In this company who arrived together at Rheims in the end of May, 1583, there were then no fewer than three, who were to lay down their lives for the Faith and be enrolled in the glorious army of martyrs. Most of them had friends and relatives at the college, and Tomson would have the great pleasure of meeting Edward Osbaldeston, who, like himself, was from the neighbourhood of Blackburn. Osbaldeston was ordained in 1585, a year after Tomson, and did not leave the college till 1589; but for him also was reserved the crown of martyrdom. Though he is not otherwise connected with this history, I cannot refrain from

quoting a letter of his, written in York Castle, 1594, shortly before his death, as it displays in a singularly graphic manner the spirit which animated these generous servants of God, and which indeed prepared them for the martyr's crown. (Challoner, vol. ii., p. 213). "I was apprehended at Towlerton by Mr. Thomas Clark, the apostate priest, upon St. Hierome's Day, at night; a thing much more to my comfort than at any other time, for that I had such a stout champion under Christ; and besides it pleased God, much to my comfort to show this sign of His love unto me that day above all others. For it was God's great goodness to call me to the honour of the priesthood, and upon St. Hierome's Day I said my first Mass, and consecrated the Blessed Body and Blood of my Saviour Jesus Christ, and received Him with great reverence and devotion, and ever since have honoured St. Hierome. And the morning before I came forth, I made my prayer to Blessed St. Hierome and in his merits I offered myself a sacrifice to God, and recommended myself to Him to direct me to His will and pleasure, and that I might walk aright in my vocation, and follow St. Hierome as long as God should see it expedient for His Church and most for His honour and glory: and if it pleased Him still to preserve me as He had done before, I never would refuse to labour, or murmur at any pain or travail; and if it should please His Majesty to suffer me to fall into the persecutors' hands, that then it would please His infinite goodness to protect me to the end; which I have no doubt but He will, after so many and so great goodnesses and gifts as He hath bestowed on me, over all my life, which are without number and inexplicable. Wherefore my hope and trust is much helped that now He will be most sure unto me, since this is the weightiest matter that I was ever about in my life; and so considering this and infinite others such like, I find great comfort, and fully trust in God's goodness, and distrust only in myself, but in Him that comforteth me I can do all things. And this actual oblation of myself that morning, and this that ensueth,

maketh me very comfortable, and bringeth me into many good and heavenly cogitations, feeling His strength so much as I have done in lesser matters, and further off from Him than this is; therefore, I nothing doubt, by His grace, that He will grant me to finish that which was for Him and by Him begun—which I pray God I may worthily do when His goodwill and pleasure is, and not before, and that I may not wish or desire anything in this life but what may best please Him, and honour Him and our Blessed Lady, his Mother, and all the Court of Heaven the most, and edify the people and strengthen them in the way to Jesus, the King of bliss. The manner of my apprehension was thus:—Abraham Sayre and I came to the inn a little before Mr. Clark, and we all came before night. I knew him not fully, for I thought he had been in the south; but at supper I looked earnestly at him, and I thought it was he, and yet I still persuaded myself that he knew me not, and if he should know me, he would do me no harm, which fell out otherwise, God forgive him for it. For when we were going to bed, he went and called the curate and the constable and apprehended us, and watched us that night and came with us to York, and stood by when I was examined before the Council, but said nothing then that I feared; and he was present afterwards when I was called again; and since I have been nothing said unto, what will follow God knoweth; but I will not be partial to myself, but prepare me for death and what else may befall unto me. Now I pray you for God's sake, what you hear or learn let me know, and what is the best course for me to take in all points, and how my brethren have behaved themselves in this case that have gone before me; and for myself I yield me wholly to obedience to you in that blessed society and number in the castle, and desire in all points to live in discipline and order, and as the common live, and what I have or shall have, it shall be in common. And therefore I pray you, direct me in all things both for my apparel and diet and everything; and as my brethren have gone before me, so would I follow in the humblest." So far the letter.

Such were the sentiments of these humble and devoted servants of God, whom the haughty ambition of Elizabeth and the craft and fanaticism of her ministers pursued with unrelenting hate, and consigned to the dungeon or scaffold. Even in these days many Protestants have no sympathy with their heroic character, and pass by with contempt or a sneer their undaunted courage and noble fortitude. When but a few years ago the Holy Father was pleased to declare these persecuted priests "Venerable," and to hold them up for the veneration of the Faithful, it was said that he had picked out for honour some obscure persons. Truly, they have been obscure, but it is time to wipe out this reproach, and this is a slight attempt to aid in the good work, to exhibit to the love and admiration of Englishmen the good deeds and the eminent virtues of these glorious martyrs of Christ. Surely there is more to be proud of in the unflinching courage of a Thules or an Osbaldeston than in all the courtly vices of a Leicester or a Hatton!

III.

His Stay at Rheims.

We may be sure that the boy would be kindly received by Dr. Allen, the president of the college. A Lancashire man himself, he would view with gratified feelings of local patriotism the numbers of Lancashire youths who offered themselves to the priesthood. Indeed, much of the fervour of the Lancashire Catholics was the fruit of his own zealous labours in his native county. The Lancashire lads soon won for themselves in the colleges of Douay and Rheims a character for shrewdness, tenacity of purpose, and, it must be added, a certain amount of rudeness and bluntness of manner, and they began to be known by the name of "hobnails." A story is told that upon one occasion a

Lancashire student had particularly distinguished himself at a public defension by the smartness and readiness of his replies. His questioner, after the defension was over, came up to congratulate him, and said to him, "You have gone pretty deep, considering that you are only a 'hob-nail.'" "Well I might, into such rotten wood!" was the ready if not over-courteous reply.

Dr. Allen was at this time fifty-one years of age. While he was the object of the most intense hostility on the part of Elizabeth and her advisers, who found in him their greatest obstacle to their cherished scheme of rooting out the Catholic Faith from England, he inspired the most unbounded admiration in the minds of English Catholics. John Pits, who had studied both at Douay and at Rheims, passes this glowing eulogium on his character:—"He had a handsome countenance and a dignified gait, and was on all occasions courteous. As regards mental endowments, he was pious, learned, discreet, and of great authority. He was humble, modest, patient, meek, and of a peaceful disposition—in a word, graced with every kind of virtue." In the year 1583 the college flourished exceedingly, and the number of students reached two-hundred. On March 9, Dr. Allen had the great satisfaction of receiving as a guest at the college his brother Gabriel. He eagerly listened to his accounts of the state of religion in England, and he was so full of the subject that on the 14th of March he wrote the following letter to Father Agazzari, the Rector of the English College at Rome:—

"From Dr. William Allen to Father Alphonsus Agazzari, S.J.,

"Rheims, 18 March, 1583.

"Very Rev. Father in Christ,—Your letter written the day before the calends of February, reached me rather later than usual, or than I liked. It was very gratifying, as it told me of the health of ours with you; of the desired progress of the college, and of the

Providence of God towards us even from Poland. God indeed, here, multiplies our people, and in many ways increases our joys.

"In England, thanks be to Christ, though the enemy rages little less than usual, we make wonderful advances. Your William Hart, of whose apprehension I have written in other letters, has shown himself a brilliant athlete in York prison. He confounds his advisers by his life, his arguments and his constancy. Those who are better disposed he either confirms or converts. It is thought that he will be the fourth martyr of that city. Still he is not yet condemned to death. That city was previously always well inclined to the Catholic faith, and the attachment has been much strengthened by the recent blood of three former martyrs. My brother in the flesh (Gabriel), whom your reverence knows, came to us three days ago from England, having escaped great dangers. When I hear him speak of the straits of the concealments and spoliations of the Catholics in the island, and on the other hand of the consolations, escapes, and devotion, I am filled with various emotions, but there is greater joy in the Lord, for in all things the Confession of Christ overcome, than there is natural sorrow, because they suffer such grievous calamities. That, at all events, was truly pleasing, and when he told me that during the whole time of three years that he had been absent, he had never failed to hear Mass, that often in the house of his sister (Mrs. Elizabeth Allen) three or four Masses had been celebrated on one day, and that every year on the anniversary of her deceased husband, twelve Masses had been offered. However, into houses of that sort of Catholics which were particularly suspected, spies are sent, who rather come to carry off chalices, than to seize persons, and these can generally be bought off with money. All that district where we were born is Catholic, though the common people, through fear of the iniquitous laws, sometimes go to the churches of the heretics. Indeed, he says that generally throughout England, we have the hearts of nearly all, though the Queen has the outward behaviour

of the greater number. In which we seem to have no little advantage, when we see souls animated with right principles, even when fear, which is not a lasting master, prevents an open confession; yet from day to day the number of those who make public profession of the Faith increases.

"My brother was compelled to stay at London a whole month for an opportunity of crossing the sea. During that time he visited the prisons and almost all the confessors of the Faith, except those in the Tower, whom he did not dare to approach. In one, the Marshalsea, as it is called, there are, besides other Catholics, four-and-twenty priests, who dwell together most peaceably in the Lord. Both in that and in the other prisons of that city many Masses are daily said, the jailors being bribed with money or being favourable to the Faith, giving their consent or at least conniving at what was done. Frequently outsiders are admitted to them for the sake of consultation, or confession, or Communion. And what is more remarkable, the priests are permitted every day to leave the prison for various parts of the city to serve the spiritual wants of Catholics, provided they return to custody at night. In this way the salvation of many is promoted, not less than if the priests were at liberty. Thus on every side God blesses the endeavours of His servants, and this experience confutes the human judgements of many who either loudly declare or secretly whisper that we ought to keep our men for happier times, bow to the persecutors, and cease from work. Were we to listen to such advisers an infinite number of souls who are now served through the blessing of God would perish, and all hope of the future conversion and salvation of our country be lost. We must not wait for things to be better, but must make them better and must win happier times from God the great and good, by the zeal, the labour, and the blood especially of the priests.

"The messenger is in haste to depart. There is no time to read over what I have written, so be indulgent

to my hurry and mistakes. May Jesus Christ keep you all as the apple of His eye.—Yours,

"W. ALLEN.

"14 March, 1585.

"The Very Rev. Father in Christ, John Alfonse Agazzari, Rector of the English College."

I have omitted some portions of the letter as having little bearing on the present sketch, but what I have given shows us plainly the keen interest which he took in the state of things in England, especially amongst the Lancashire Catholics. That he formed too sanguine an estimate of the feelings of Englishmen in general towards the Faith is now plain to us. This led him into schemes to restore the Catholic religion in England by political means, which ended in disastrous failure, and this, not unnaturally, has caused his memory to be viewed by Protestants in a very unfavourable light. But to Catholics he will always remain the unwearying pastor of souls, the wise and successful president of Douay College, and the learned, sagacious Cardinal.

The College of Rheims enjoyed the guidance of its great head for only a short time after the arrival of John Thules. In the August of 1585, a dangerous illness compelled him to journey to Spa, for the sake of the waters. Whilst at that watering place, Fr. Fitzherbert tells us, urgent letters from the Jesuits at Rome reached him requesting his presence in the English College to appease a quarrel that had broken out among the Fathers and the students, and so important did he consider the matter, that, in spite of weakened strength and serious infirmities, he made the long and difficult journey. He never returned to Rheims, being detained at Rome by Pope Sixtus V., who in 1587 raised him to the dignity of Cardinal. Meanwhile John Thules in September, 1583, received the tonsure in the chapel of St Remigius, at the hands of Cardinal de Guise. George Besley, of Goosnargh, the future martyr, received the tonsure on the same day, and Robert

Anderton was ordained subdeacon on the day following. Thus we find him as he gradually advanced in his studies, the companion and friend of those, who like himself were one day to win the martyr's crown. In 1585, a new persecuting law was passed by the English Parliament. It was enacted that "all Jesuits, seminary priests, and other priests ordained by the authority of the See of Rome, shall depart out of her Majesty's dominions, and that if any such priest, deacon, religious or ecclesiastical person shall come into or remain in the Queen's dominions, he shall be adjudged a traitor and suffer accordingly. Furthermore, every person who shall receive, relieve, or maintain any such Jesuit, seminary or other priest, deacon, or ecclesiastical person, shall be adjudged a felon, and suffer death and forfeiture as in cases of felony. Also if any other of the Queen's subjects now being brought up in any college of Jesuits or seminary beyond the seas, shall not return within six months and take oath of supremacy he shall on his return be judged guilty of high treason. Also if any one shall send or convey money or other relief to any Jesuit, seminary or other priest, deacon, or religious or ecclesiastical person, for the maintenance of any college of Jesuits or seminary beyond the seas, or of any person then being in the said college or seminaries, he shall be punishable with *premunire*. Further, any subject of the Queen, who, during the Queen's life, sends, his or her child beyond the sea without the Queen's special licence or that of four Privy Councillors, shall forfeit £100. Lastly, whoever shall know of any such Jesuit, seminary or other priest aforesaid, being in the Queen's dominions, and shall not within twelve days disclose the same to some Justice of the Peace, shall be fined and imprisoned at the Queen's pleasure. And if any such Justice of the Peace to whom such matter shall be discovered do not within twenty-eight days give information to some of the Queen's Privy Council, or the President or to the Vice-president of the Queen's Council established in the north, or in the Marches of Wales, he shall forfeit for every such offence two hundred marks."

This is the famous statute of 27 Elizabeth, cap. 2, under which so many priests and faithful laymen were condemned to death, and Ven. John Thules to win his crown. The students at Rheims were quite aware of those bloodthirsty statutes made against them, but if the Queen hoped to shake their heroic resolution, or to strike them with fear, she was mistaken, for an eager desire for martyrdom burned in the hearts of the students, and they longed only the more eagerly for their hour to come, that they too might confute the malice and cruelty of their persecutors. Allen, in his apology for the English seminaries, alluding to the proclamation of 1581, testifies to the same feelings:— "Their late terrors (thanks be to God) trouble them so little that many straight on the arrival here, in Rheims, of the late edict of January came to their superiors to desire leave to go in, and being answered that the times were not seasonable, they said it was no God-a-mercy for a priest to enter in at other times, but that they were brought up and made especially for such days, and nineteen persons the week following took orders." We cannot doubt that some such sentiments filled the breast of our martyr when, in the June of 1586, the news arrived at Rheims that the Ven. William Marsden, Robert Anderton, and William Tomson had sealed their faith with their blood. They had been his friends, companions in his college life, and it became his hope and his end that he should one day share in their sufferings and their triumph.

IV.

At the English College in Rome.

John Thules had been nearly seven years at Rheims, when on the 27th of March, 1590, he was sent to Rome, along with Edward Tempest. They were then auditors, or students, of scholastic theology, and it was arranged

that they should finish their studies in the English College in the Eternal City. He arrived at Rome on May 8, being then twenty-two years old, and he took the college oath on March 20, 1591. Edward Tempest, the companion of his journey, belonged to the Tempests of Stella Hall, in the county of Durham. He remained at Rome till 1597, and, in the disputes that broke out amongst the students in the English College after the death of Cardinal Allen, he was on the side of the discontented, though at the time he held the posts of tutor and prefect of rooms, and had been raised to the priesthood. After two years' work in England he was arrested in 1599 by an apostate named Sacheverall, and lodged in prison in the Clink.

John Thules was but two years in Rome, and yet it fell to his lot in that brief period to see five Popes occupy the See of St. Peter. The vigorous and indomitable Sixtus V., after a reign of only five years, into which he had crowded the events of an ordinary lifetime, died on August 27, 1590, a few months after Thules' arrival. His was an extraordinary career. Born in the humblest rank of a poor peasant, he had become a Franciscan Friar. His abilities induced Pius V. to employ him in various important missions, and to raise him to the Cardinalate. On the death of Gregory XIII. he became Pope, and at once set vigorously to work to repress disorder and brigandage in the States of the Church, to beautify the city of Rome, and infuse new life into the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. To this day, the Egyptian obelisk in the Piazza of St. Peter's is a monument of his architectural taste. For centuries it had lain prostrate on the earth half buried in rubbish, and it was a work of no little difficulty, with the appliances of those days, to raise it to an erect position. But if his magnificence excited the admiration of the Romans, his severity provoked their hatred, and on his death the statues which had been erected in the city to his honour were ruthlessly cast down by the populace. His successor, Urban VII., reigned only thirteen days; and Gregory XIV., and Innocent IX., had passed away

before the close of 1591. On January 30, 1592, Clement VIII. ascended the Papal throne.

As Cardinal Allen was residing in Rome at this time, it thus happened that he had to take part in four Conclaves for the election of a Pope. By Gregory XIV., he was associated with Cardinal Mark Antony Colonna and many other learned men, amongst others the famous Jesuit, Father Bellarmine, in revising the text of the Vulgate, into which many errors had crept. For nineteen days the learned company stayed at Zagarola, three miles from Palestrina, in a residence of Cardinal Colonna, diligently pursuing their laborious task. In a Brief, dated September 18, 1591, the same Pope conferred upon Cardinal Allen the most ample faculties for administering the ecclesiastical affairs of the English Catholics, and expressed his high esteem for him in the warmest and most affectionate language. Of the premature death of Innocent, Cardinal Allen, in a letter to Father Parsons, speaks in these terms: "God is angry with us, as you may perceive and we do feel, by the open taking from us our head and pastor. For now is Innocentius also, in whom for his great prudence, learning, and virtue we had great hope, taken unto God after he had been in the See only two months." With Clement VIII. the Cardinal was on equally good terms. As Cardinal Aldobrandini, Clement had been Vice-Protector of the English College, and he took the liveliest interest in its well being. The college diary records that on the feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, 1586, he with seven other Cardinals was present at the college. He administered Holy Communion to the students with his own hands: listened with the deepest interest to the panegyric of St. Thomas, given by one of the students, in which a description of the deplorable state of religion in England was given; and afterwards dined with the community. When he became Pope under the title of Clement VIII., he continued to regard the college with the kindliest feelings, and the students soon realized that they had no warmer friend than the Holy Father He held Cardinal Allen in the highest

esteem, and spoke freely with him on the affairs of the English Catholics. He enrolled amongst the Cardinals some of the most learned men of the time, and among the rest Cardinals Bellarmine and Baronius. These great men would be familiar figures at the English College during the time that Thules was there. A greater than either, who was well known at the college, was St. Philip Neri, now fast nearing his end; and Thules may well have been among that group of students, whom St. Philip greeted with those well known words, "Salvete flores Martyrum." St. Philip died May 25, 1595.*

Father Joseph Cresswell was rector of the English College from 1589 to 1592, covering the whole time that Thules was there. He was born in London, pursued his studies at the English College in Rome, and was afterwards Vice-Prefect of the English Mission in Spain, where he acquired great influence with Philip II. In the August of 1591 a spy of the English Government, named John Gale, received hospitality at the English College for eight days, and he afterwards was seven days in the household of Cardinal Allen, but left abruptly for Loreto. The State papers of the Public Record Office, Dom. Eliz. vol. CCXLII., May 26, 1586, contain the man's own declaration of his infamous calling.

Thules found many Lancashire students at the college; indeed Brother Foley tells us that Lancashire surpassed in the numbers it supplied to the college any other county. More than 200 Lancashire names have been counted up in the diary. Among those who had also been at Rheims with him was John Redman, who later on accompanied him in his return journey to the north. Redman afterwards became Canon of the Cathedral Chapter of St. Omer's. He was a very learned man, and a Doctor of Divinity. At his death he left his library and a third part of his property to Douay

* St. Aloysius too was at this time a student at the Roman College, where it would be our martyr's privilege to meet him daily.

College. Besides Redman, there were many others whom Thules had known at Rheims, so that he would find himself no stranger within the walls of the English College. Amongst his fellow-students was Richard Broughton, who, though descended from a Lancashire family, belonged to the diocese of Lincoln. He was compelled, on account of ill health, to leave Rome, in 1591, and he went to Rheims, where he made great progress in Greek and Hebrew, and also applied himself to the diligent study of British antiquities. On his return to England, in 1593, he laboured on the mission, but still pursued his favourite hobby of British antiquities. For this purpose he from time to time repaired to Oxford, and he is entered as a sojourner there June 19, 1626. He became assistant to the Arch-priest, Canon of the English Chapter, and Vicar-General to Dr. William Bishop, the Bishop of Chalcedon, who was the first Catholic Bishop in England after the Reformation. He died in 1634, and was buried at his native place, Great Stuckley, Co. Huntingdon. It is strange, when dealing with these times of blood and persecution, to come across a priest who could devote himself to antiquarian pursuits, and who though filling important posts in the Church could die in peace at an advanced age in his own village.

I must mention two other schoolfellows of Thules, Jos. Lampton, and Henry Pugh. The former was born at Malton, in Yorkshire, in 1569, and was of a respectable family. He entered the College at Rheims, Sep. 30, 1584, and was sent to Rome in 1589. His zeal for souls prompted him to ask to go on the English mission, and he accompanied Thules on his return to England. His short but glorious career may be here added in the words of Bishop Challoner: "Arriving in England, he began his missionary work, but was immediately apprehended and committed to prison, and not long after brought to the bar, arraigned and condemned for being a priest and coming to England to perform his priestly offices in this kingdom. For this, and no other reason, he had sentence to die the death of a traitor, which he

suffered with great constancy and fortitude. He was cut down alive, and the hangman (who was one of the felons, who, to save his own life was to perform that office) having begun the butchery by dismembering the martyr, had so great a horror of what he was doing, that he absolutely refused to go on with the operation, though he was to die for the refusal; so that the Sheriff was obliged to seek another executioner, whilst the martyr, with invincible patience and courage, supported a torment which cannot be thought of without horror, and which shocked even the most barbarous of the spectators; till, at length, a butcher from a neighbouring village was brought to the work, who, ripping him up and bowelling him, set his holy soul at liberty, to take its happy flight to its sovereign and eternal good."

He suffered at Newcastle, July 27, 1593, in the flower of his age—for he was not yet thirty—and in the sight of his friends and relations.

The second, Henry Pugh, was of the county of Flint, and of good family. He had, before leaving England, been committed to the county gaol for recusancy. He was several times put on the rack, until he became speechless and almost insensible, but on recovering himself, was again subjected to the torture. He did not, however, commit himself or others, and when brought to trial was acquitted. In June, 1585, he was received at the College at Rheims and in 1589 he left for Rome. This brave Confessor of the Faith died at the College at Rome, August 20, 1592. Probably the severity of his sufferings on the rack had been too much for his youthful frame, for he was little more than twenty years old at the time of his imprisonment. He was twenty-six years of age when he came to Rome, being several years older than most of his companions, and no doubt when he could be prevailed upon to tell the story of his torture, he would be listened to with eager interest. His fellow students knew well enough what their brethren in the Faith were suffering in their own country, and expected nothing else for themselves when their time should come; but in Pugh they had constantly amongst

them one who had already drunk of the bitter cup of persecution, and had felt the excruciating pain of being stretched on the rack. Another student at this time in Rome was a Sidgreaves, afterwards Father Sidgreaves, a member of a family, who long held land in Goosnargh (Inglewhite Lodge).

The two years Thules spent in Rome must have been a pleasant period of peace and rest. He was among congenial companions, and as the college at Rome was so intimately connected with that at Rheims, receiving from it most of its students and in turn often sending back men with whom the climate of Rome did not agree, it would never be dull. The charms of ancient Rome would in many respects be even greater then than now, and the passion for classical antiquities was almost at its height. Then, some of the most distinguished men of the time, great saints like St. Philip Neri, and great theologians and historians like Bellarmine and Baronius, were conspicuous in the daily life of the city. Thules witnessed the coronation of no fewer than four Popes, and so his eyes were familiar with the most brilliant ecclesiastical ceremonies. But his time of peace was now at an end, and it was announced to him that he must prepare to leave Rome and all its agreeable associations and journey to England, to meet there no hospitable welcome, but a life of trial, the hardships of imprisonment, and, for all that he knew, a bloody death on the scaffold. He left Rome in the company of seven other priests; the Pope, Clement VIII., supplied the money for their expenses. Among his companions, besides Lampton, there was another priest of Rheims and Douay who was to share the martyr's palm. This was Francis Montford, of the diocese of Norwich, who was condemned to die for receiving priest's orders, and suffered in London before he had spent more than a few months in his native country. In those days the journey was long and difficult, and sometimes took a month or six weeks. To obtain a ship to cross the English Channel was often a difficult and tedious task, but when all these obstacles had been surmounted, John

Thules, in the middle of the year 1592, now twenty-four years of age, landed, a priest, on the shores of his well-loved England.

V.

His Missionary Career.

For nine years Thules had been abroad, in the midst of Catholic surroundings. He had lived among friends, with men of his own age and of his own views. No concealment of his religion had been necessary, and he could walk in the open street, and his dress and mien might inform any passer-by what he was and what were his aims. His religion as a Catholic and his profession as an ecclesiastic brought with them no shame nor fear. But from the time he arrived at the coast of France or the Low Countries, and had to make arrangements for his voyage across the English Channel, all this was changed. He must not henceforth wear the garb nor assume the manner of a priest; he must carefully disguise himself as best he might so as to avoid, if possible, the keen eyes of spies and informers. It was a sore trial to a man of high spirit and true courage, but it had to be borne; it was a necessary condition of his doing his duty as a priest in England. Nor was it long before he attracted the suspicions of some of the officers of the law. Whether it was by some chance incaution of his own or some artful contrivance of others, he fell into the hands of the Queen's pursuivants, and was imprisoned at Wisbech. This place, so memorable as having been in Queen Elizabeth's time the place of confinement for many priests and laymen suffering for the Faith, is situated on the borders of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, in the heart of the great Fen country, and in what is still called the Isle of Ely. At one time the Bishops of Ely resided here, but in Elizabeth's reign it became a state prison.

Not a vestige of the building now remains, and a street runs over its site. But in the sixteenth century it was a dilapidated ruinous building. Within were dreary roofless walls and courtyards heaped with rubbish; without, festering mud and stagnant waters choked with reedy vegetation, under a heavy, mist-laden sky, completed the desolation of a flat country, marshy and undrained.

Amongst the prisoners in the Queen's reign were the Venerable Thomas Watson, Bishop of Lincoln, and Feckenham, the last Abbot of Westminster. Under the rule of Governor Grey, the confessors met with the harshest treatment; they were left in filth, solitude, and want. Watson died in 1583, and Feckenham 1585, worn out with suffering and privation. There were more than thirty priests detained in this pestilential prison at one time, and for the most part they had to live at their own charge. It is true, collections for their maintenance were made amongst the wealthy English Catholics, but communication with the prisoners was difficult and precarious, and so they were often reduced to great straits and suffered much from cold and want of food.

In this prison Thules met with Dr. Chrystopher Bagshawe, whose remarkable history well illustrates the chequered times in which he lived. The very shadows in his strange career throw into stronger relief the difficulties and trials of the English Catholics of Elizabeth's reign. He was born in the diocese of Lichfield, before the reign of Queen Mary. He went to Oxford, and soon attracted the attention of his superiors by his brilliant talents and success in study. He became an accomplished Greek scholar, and was looked upon as a man of the highest promise. In 1572 he was admitted probationer Fellow of Balliol College when the celebrated Jesuit Father, Robert Persons, also held a fellowship there, and about 1579 he was chosen Principal or Vice-Principal of Gloucester Hall. Balliol College at this time became an object of suspicion to Government on account of the leaning shown to Catholic opinions by many of its members. In 1582 Bagshawe threw up

all his preferments and went abroad, and we find him received at the College in Rheims, July 17, of that year. He was ordained priest in the May of 1583, and said his first Mass on the 14th of June, about a fortnight after John Thules entered the College. Bagshawe remained at Rheims till August 13, of the same year, and then with many companions set out to Rome. His character at that time is given in a letter from Dr. Barret, of Rheims, to Father Agazzari, dated the day of his departure for Rome. Dr. Barret says: "Those who are coming to you this time are amongst the best men we have. Those who excel the others in age and talent will perhaps be somewhat troublesome: for I fear that in obedience and humility they may be as they have been. Certainly unless there be a great change, especially in one of them, it will be a difficult business for your Reverence. I am speaking of Bagshawe, for whom I hear you have written. He has great abilities and is a good student, but he is very passionate, hard to deal with, and restless; but he promises that he will overcome these and other faults, and moreover he wishes to go to you. At present he is well disposed towards your society, and takes your side against those who love you less than they ought." In this character Dr. Barret was not mistaken, and in spite of many excellent qualities, Bagshawe was to the end of his life involved in many quarrels. When in Italy, he took his degree as Doctor of Divinity. On April 2, 1585, he was again at Rheims, and on May 27, of the same year he was sent to England. There he was a zealous missioner, and, in 1593, we find him a prisoner in Wisbech. He renewed his acquaintance with Thules, and was an acute observer of his many virtues. I cannot quite ascertain whether the Venerable Sigebert Buckley, the last survivor of the English Benedictines, was in Wisbech at the same time, but Bagshawe in a letter to the General of the Spanish Benedictines—(see the Acta Capituli Generalis Anglicani, Ord. S. Benedicti, 1633)—describes various Benedictines whom he had known in prison. After mentioning Feckenham and Buckley, he goes on to speak

of John Thules in these words—"One most saintly priest, Father Thules, who in our prison wished to be a Benedictine, actually died a martyr." As the Order was not restored in England till 1607, when the aged, Father Buckley, then ninety years of age, professed two novices in the Gatehouse Prison, Westminster, Thules had not the opportunity of carrying out his pious wish. His earliest associations in boyhood had been with the Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which belonged in Catholic times to the Benedictine Priory of Upholland, his native village, and no doubt many affectionate memories of the banished monks and their good deeds still lingered in the district. His early love for the monks would be renewed in prison in the society of Father Buckley, and he would probably be greatly influenced by his saintly conduct and his pious conversation. The Priory of Upholland was the latest foundation belonging to the Order, and it is a singular coincidence that the first aspirant for the monastic habit after the Reformation should spring from its neighbourhood. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of Dr. Bagshawe, he was a very able man, and his testimony to the saintly character of Thules is therefore especially valuable.

A curious feature of the state of things at Wisbech Castle is to be found in a report from John Kepple and Thomas Helker to the Queen's Council, dated September 7, 1599. These men had been commissioned to inquire "concerning the taking into the castle by the priests to serve them, of certain boys, sons of gentlemen, who are nursed up in Papistry, by which means that place appointed for a prison serves for a seminary to corrupt youth." They further say, "We have, as you required us, repaired thither to sequester those boys, remove them to other houses in the town, and examine whose sons they are, and send you their examinations." After mentioning some other boys, they go on to speak of the examination of Nicholas Clayton, fourteen years old. "He is the son of William Clayton, of Whepstone, Co. Derby, yeoman, and was sent by him to Dr. Bagshaw,

who placed him with Thules, a priest in Wisbech Castle." A note adds, "He afterwards confessed to being Nicholas Bagshaw, son of Henry Bagshaw, of Chapelle-Firth, Co. Derby, and neither his father nor mother go to church." (P.R.O. Eliz., vol. 272, No. 107.)

These extracts throw a strange light on the times; they tell us of the straits to which Catholics were put in order to obtain a religious education for their children, of the indomitable resolution with which they pursued their purpose, and the ingenuity with which they secured it in apparently the most hopeless quarter. The very prison in which their priests were immured served them as a place for training up their sons in the fear and love of God, and in choosing His service rather than that of the world. It is not unlikely that the so-called William Clayton was a relation of Dr. Bagshaw, and if this be the case, it is another evidence of the esteem and confidence which that accomplished scholar felt for our Martyr.

Thules was for some years detained here, but at length made his escape, or the evidence against him not being enough to secure a conviction, he was set at liberty. He sought a refuge in his own county of Lancashire, and seems to have served in the neighbourhood of Bolton. Here he became intimate with the Ashtons of Lever. Lever is mentioned in Doomsday Book as "Parva Lofre," and was included in the extensive estates of the Barons of Manchester. Albert Gredle, the younger, gave away some lands in Parva Lofre, and they were held by the heirs of the recipient in the reign of King John. The Ashtons became possessed of Lever in the reign of Edward IV., and were lords of Great Lever in Queen Elizabeth's reign. For a time the family held on to the Catholic faith, and a son who was born at this period had the young priest for his godfather. Thules must have been on the most friendly terms with the Ashtons; he won the lasting attachment of his godson, and his instructions, his advice, and his influence produced so deep and favourable an impression that when unfortunately young Ashton conformed to the Queen's

religion his regard for his former pastor continued unabated.

The state of religion at this time in Lancashire was very peculiar. Of course the laws were the same for it as for the rest of England, but owing to the temper of the people it was not an easy matter to enforce them with the same persistency and rigour. Many of the magistrates were Catholics at heart, and made their appearance at church unwillingly and just sufficiently often to save them from the crushing exactions laid on Catholics. The common people were still attached to the old Faith, were ever ready to give shelter to the hunted victims of the law and often made it impossible for the pursuivants to carry on their infamous trade.

The late Rev. T. E. Gibson, in his valuable work, "Lydiate and its Associations," has collected a number of documents relating to the condition of Lancashire in Elizabeth's time, and they amply prove the strong hold still kept by the Catholic faith in our county, and the bitter feelings provoked thereby in the minds of zealous Protestants.

In a report dated 1591, a contemporary writer complains: "By the Ecclesiastical Commission small reformation has been had in these counties, as may appear by the emptiness of churches on Sundays and holidays in the time of divine service, multitudes of bastards and abundance of drunkards.

"The people in these countries for the most lack instruction for the learning and doing of their duties to God, her Majesty, and their neighbours, by reason that the preachers are few and the greater part of the parsons, vicars, and curates unlearned; many of those parsons and vicars are not resident on their benefices.

"The youth of those countries are trained up in learning by such as profess Papisme, and by them greatly affected.

"Some of the wives of some of the Justices of the Peace within the same countries, their sons and daughters-in-law, servants and tenants, do not frequent the church.

"Some of the Justices of Peace very seldom or not at all, their wives, children, and servants have not Communicated the Lord's Supper since the beginning of her Majesty's reign. The people in great heaps in service and sermon time do swarm the streets and ale-houses of many of the church towns, the churches therein having then not present many besides the curate and his parish clerk.

"In church towns and divers other places of these countries cock fighting and other exceeding unlawful games are tolerated upon Sundays and holidays at the time of Divine Service; and oftentimes thereat divers of the Justices of the Peace of the same counties and also some of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners." Dom. Eliz. cclxvi, No. 138.

In a communication sent by the Bishop of London to Cecil in the last year of the Queen's reign, the complaint is made:—

"They in Lancashire and those parts recusants stand not in fear by reason of the great multitude there is of them. Likewise I have heard it reported publicly amongst them that they of that country have beaten divers pursuivants extremely, and made them vow and swear that they would never meddle with any recusants more; and one pursuivant in particular to eat his warrant, and vow never to trouble them nor any recusants more." Dom. Eliz, cclxxix, No. 86.

Even when they presented themselves at church, it is alleged that they disturbed Divine Service, "By the private prayers used of the most, with crossing and knocking of the breast, and sometimes with beads closely handled." Raines, Cheetham Miscellanies, V.

I add another paper from Father Gibson's collections. It is placed under the year 1591, and sets forth still more plainly the indisposition of many of the landed gentry to give up the Catholic Faith. It thus describes the character of the gentlemen named:—

"*Sir Richard Sherbourne, Knt., J.P., and Ecclesiastical Commissioner, Stannyhurste.*

"His wief, children, famylie, for the most parte,

seldome come to the church, and never communycate, and some of his daughters married and not known by whom, but suspected by masse priests; and intellengener to the Papists of Lancr, as apperith by a lre latelie delivr ovr to the Lls.

"*Sir John Radcliffe, Knt., a Justice and Eccll Commissr, Hollyns also Radcliffe in the M. Moores.*

"His wief being very well trained in the religion synce his intermarriage with hir ys revolted to Popery, and seldome or never comes to the church.

"*Thos. Preston, Esq., Justice of the Peace he unto fforance.*

"His famylie seldome resort to the churche, and he himself is a great favorisr of the Allens and of other notable recusants and Papists.

"*Christopher Anderton, a Justice preignotory, and one of the ffermors of the fines, &c., Lostocke.*

"His wief, children, and famylie seldome or never come to the church, and communycat: divers of his sonnes and daughters married, and not known where or by whom.

"*Willm ffaryngedon, a Justice of the Peace, Wouerden, Blackborne.*

"Children, wief, seldome communycat since her Majesty's reign.

"*Alexr Rigbie, a Justice and Clerk of the Crowne in Lankyshire, Bourghe.*

"His wief, eldest sonne, and others of his children and household, seldome or never come to the churche, and one of his younger sonnes married by a mass priest.

"*Edwd Scaresbrick, Justice of the Peace, Scarisbricke.*

"Seldome communycateth, his children trayned up in Popery, and his daughters never come to the church.

"*John Molineux, a Justice and Steward of her Majesties hundreds of Derby, Salford, and Blakeborne, Sefton.*

"His wief and famylie are very evillie disposed, and retayneth in his s'vice gentlemen of very good countenance, the most notoryous Papists of that end of Lankeshire. As the Blundells, Irelands, and others.

"*Richd Mollineux, Esq., Justice of the Peace, near Darby.*

" His famylie very evell.

" *Richd Bolde, a Justice Bold.*

" He hath of late reformed his wief and famylie.

" *Sir Thos. Hesketh, Knt., and Justice of the Peace, Rufford, Marton.*

" His wief and eldeste sonne seldome or never resorte to the church and communycate: the same sonne giveth countenance to Worthington the semynary priest. And the now Baron of Walton's wief daughter was corrupt in that house, and nowe refuseth to resorte to the churche, who before her coming thither was very well disposed to religion.

" *Richd Braddell, a Justice, Vice-Chancllor of Lancr and Deputy to her Majts Attorney in that countie nr Garstang.*

" His wief and famylie very ill dispesed, seldome or never come to the churche.

" *Edwd Tildesley, a Justice and underkepr of Merescoughe Forest, under the Earl of Darby, Morley, Merescoughe.*

" His children and famylie are very greatly corrupted, and few or none of them come to the churche."

VI.

His Passion and Martyrdom.

The Latin life of Ven. John Thules, published at Douay the year after his martyrdom, gives us few particulars of his life after arriving in his native county, but it states that " God Almighty prepared his servant for the crown of martyrdom by many trials and crosses, which he bore with wonderful courage and tranquillity of mind." It is not difficult, however, to enumerate many things which must have caused him much suffering. We must remember that he had no abiding residence, that during the twenty remaining years of his life he had to rely upon the hospitality of others who could entertain him only at the risk of their property and their lives. As a matter of fact we shall see later

on that the companion of his imprisonment and death at Lancaster was a poor weaver, whose sole crime was relieving and assisting priests. News was constantly brought to him of the martyrdom of fellow priests, some of whom were well known to him, and had been the sharers of his studies and his travels. Again the fines and imprisonments which were inflicted on the gentlemen of Lancashire, from many of whom he himself had received shelter, would fill his kindly heart with sorrow. Shortly before his coming to Lancashire, Mr. Richard Blundell of Crosby and his son had been committed to prison, on the charge of having entertained a priest of the name of Woodroffe, by Henry, fourth Earl of Derby, and the father died a prisoner in Lancaster Castle.

Ferdinando, Lord Strange, who became after his father's death in 1593 the fifth Earl of Derby, was also zealous in the work of persecution. In a letter to Chaderton, Bishop of Chester, he speaks of Lancashire as "so unbridled and bad a handful of England," and assures him that "no man shall set his foot before me in any whatever service belonging to her Majesty, but I will say with Alexander 'Strike the city of thieves for disloyalty,' to which walls (I mean those rebellious-minded Papists) myself will be willing to give the first blow." The shameful task of rooting out of the minds of Lancashire men, the Faith they had cherished from the times when Roman soldiers were quartered at Manchester and Ribchester, was evidently a congenial one. Ferdinando was Earl of Derby for too short a time for him to gather many laurels in the inglorious cause, but his brother William, the sixth Earl was the instrument of bringing our Martyr to his bloody but most blessed crown.

The infamous conduct of the apostate priest Dingley, in denouncing the good people who had welcomed him into their houses, and assisted reverently at his Mass, must also have been a sore trial to every faithful Lancashire man. It had this especial aggravation in it that it tended to destroy the trust that persecuted priests

had in each other, for who could say for certain that Dingley had no imitators in his treachery?

A third trouble to a devout servant of Holy Church was the differences which grew up among the clergy themselves. After the death of Cardinal Allen, Fr. Persons, of the Society of Jesus, was the ecclesiastical superior of the forlorn remnant of the Church in England. In 1591, Blackwell was appointed Archpriest, and his jurisdiction extended over all England. His administration excited discontent among the clergy, and the quarrel became so warm that two deputies were chosen by the secular priests to go to Rome to represent their side of the question. One of these was Robert Charnock, of Blacklach House, near Leyland. He was of a good Lancashire family, who were stout recusants for many generations, and whose hall, by its careful arrangements for the concealment of the priest and the altar furniture, still proclaims the terrors of those evil times. I need not go further into the story of this unfortunate dispute, but to Father Thules it must have been a source of deep pain and even anxiety. The leading personages engaged in the contest were many of them well known to him, some of them personal friends, and all had been students of the Douay and Roman Colleges. He did not live to see Dr. William Bishop, the companion of Charnock in his mission to Rome, consecrated Bishop of Chalcedon for that did not happen till 1623, seven years after his death; but we may be sure that he heartily sympathized with one of the main objects of the embassy, the desire of the English Catholics for a Bishop.

As the time went on he had the sorrow of seeing many families give up the Faith; his own friends, the Ashtons of Lever, were of this number, and his godson also conformed, though he never wavered in his love and attachment to his religious instructor. Father Thules was extremely mortified in his manner of life, and he had much to suffer from severe illness. On one occasion, when he was at death's door, through extremity of sickness, and had received all the rights of the Church, he was divinely admonished that he was not to

die that time, and must look for a more glorious death by martyrdom. From that time forward he was ever preparing for his end, and acquired a complete mastership over himself, and so moderated all his words that nothing came out of his mouth but what had been well studied and meditated beforehand.

About the close of 1601, the health of the Queen began to fail. Her godson, Sir John Harrington, who visited the Court in October, describes in a private letter the state in which he found her. "She was altered in her features and reduced to a skeleton. Her food was nothing but manchet bread and savoury pottage. Her taste for dress was gone. She had not changed her dress for many days. Nothing could please her. She was the torment of the ladies who waited on her person; she stamped with her feet and swore violently at the objects of her anger. For her protection she had ordered a sword to be placed by her table, which she often took in her hand and thrust with violence into the tapestry of her chamber." (Lingard, vol. vi, p. 644.) During the paroxysms of her disorder she was alarmed at the frightful phantoms conjured up by her imagination. At length she obstinately refused to return to bed. Day and night she sat bolstered up with cushions having her finger in her mouth and her eyes fixed on the floor. She seldom condescended to speak, and rejected every offer of nourishment. The Bishops and Lords of the Council advised and entreated in vain. For all of them, with the exception of the Lord Admiral, she expressed the most profound contempt. But when he urged her to go to bed, she replied that if he had seen what she saw there he would never make the request. The young, fair Mrs. Southwell, her sworne mayde of honour, says of her—"She sat for two days and three nights on a stool ready dressed, and would never be brought by any of the Council to go to bed. . . She kept her bed fifteen days, besides three days she sat upon a stool, and one day being pulled up by force stood on her feet fifteen hours. She said to the Lord Admiral in a pite-

ous tone, 'My Lord I am tied with an iron collar about my neck,' and when he sought to console her, she replied, 'No, I am tied, and the case is altered with me.'" These accounts are quoted by Dr. Lingard from the writings of persons who were eye-witnesses of what they narrate, and heard the words with their own ears—Sir John Harrington and Lady Southwell. The manuscript of the lady is endorsed April 1, 1607. The last days of this bright star of the Reformation set in the deepest gloom. It is not given us to judge, but it seems as if the innocent blood which in her pride and presumption she had so freely poured out, was now ever present before her imagination, and filled her soul with bitter remorse and hopeless despair.

That Thules would share the hopes entertained by his fellow Catholics, that the reign of her successor, James I., would be more favourable to their persecuted body, we cannot doubt; and great would be his disappointment when experience showed that he was as cruel an oppressor as the dread Elizabeth herself. With him the greed for money was ever sovereign, and the fortunes of the Catholics offered him the readiest means of filling his coffers. In the year 1612 alone, as Fr. Bridgett tells us in the *Month* for May, he made £371,060 by the forfeitures of recusants. Besides, he was afraid of the growing power of the Puritans, and they were ever clamouring for the blood of the Catholics. To appease their noisy cries he sanctioned what his natural gentleness of disposition shrank from, and during his reign the fines were rigorously exacted from Catholics and their blood was ruthlessly shed on the scaffold.

Meanwhile Father Thules' life wore on in suffering and sorrow for himself, while he was ministering in a hundred ways to the sorrows and sufferings of others. His time at length came, and he was arrested by the command of William, the sixth Earl of Derby. He was committed to the county gaol at Lancaster to await trial at the Lent Assizes, in 1616. Father Thules was already well acquainted with the hardships of prison life. It is probable that his frequent and severe illnesses were partly due to

his close and prolonged imprisonment at Wisbech, but when he fell into the hands of the Lord Lieutentant's officers he submitted cheerfully to his fate. In those days journeys were no easy matters even to persons of rank who could command every convenience, but a ride on horseback, guarded on either side by officers of the law, through the wretched tracks called roads which he was forced to traverse in going from the south-east part of Lancashire to the county town was one of much suffering and humiliation. "Time-honoured Lancaster" was then the chief though not the largest town in Lancashire. The military genius of the Romans had selected it for the site of a border fortress, and after seven hundred years of obscurity and neglect a Norman baron, Roger of Poitou, once again recognized its advantageous position for defence and attack. The castle was re-erected in more than its former grandeur, and was the residence and stronghold of one of William the Conqueror's foremost barons.

In the sixth year of King John (1204), Robert de Gredlai, Baron of Manchester, who was the Governor, was by letter from the King, dated June 25, discharged of the ward of the castle. In the tenth year of the same reign, November 3, a writ was issued to the Earl of Chester, Robert de Greidley, and others, directing them to provide men for the construction of the moats and fosses of the castle. In the seventeenth year of his reign, as Robert de Grest, Baron of Manchester (for so he is described in the document) had joined the Barons at Runnymede, King John committed the castle and all its appurtenances and all the said Robert's lands to Adam de Yeland to hold during the King's pleasure. The reader will note the curious diversity of spelling in the name of the Governor of Lancaster Castle in King John's time; in three official documents it is spelled Gredlai, Greidley, and Grest, the name still survives in that of the writer of these pages. Baines tells us that in all probability the tower and inner portion of the gateway, the dungeon tower, Constantine's tower, and well tower were built in John's

reign. Beneath the well tower is an arched dungeon, reached by a steep flight of steps, the vaulting of which has been constructed by laying bundles of faggots and withies sloping from the centre, and then pouring concrete on the whole. The marks left by the sticks in the mortar are yet plainly visible. Atticus, in his amusing account of his visit to the castle, gives a terrible description of the horrors of this fearful dungeon. "By no stretch of imagination could you conjure up and picture such a place. Many feet below the ground, dark as Erebus, damp, cold and dismal; not a window, not a ray of light, nor a breath of fresh air; everything black as midnight, cold, and clammy as the fingers of death, with a low-pointed roof, with strong iron rings on the floor to which poor wretches were fastened, and with a doorway indicating double iron sheets and double iron locks."

The noble gateway tower is perhaps the finest in England. It was built at three different times. The inner archway, containing the massive oak door, stands immediately behind the portcullis groove and vaulted entrance passage. These probably belong to the thirteenth century, and were erected in the governorship of Robert de Gredlai. The outer archway is surmounted by a niche; the niche, the wall, octagonal towers up to the level of the top of the niche are of the fourteenth century, and were probably the work of John of Gaunt himself. The upper portion with the machicolated battlements and turrets were probably added in the fifteenth century. A further great alteration was made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth in the year 1585. The alarm caused by the threatened invasion of Philip of Spain stirred up the authorities to put into a state of defence Lancaster Castle and many other fortresses in the kingdom. At this time the Great Keep was much improved. The lower part of the keep is a magnificent relic of Norman architecture, being nearly eighty feet square, with walls ten feet thick. It was now raised to a height of seventy feet with the little turret called John O'Gaunt's Chair,

rising a further ten feet, and affording a very wide view of the country around. A stone with the initials of the Queen and those of Richard Ashton, sheriff, is placed on the battlement of this tower. In Elizabeth's reign it was the chief state prison of the county. Here were brought murderers and thieves and coiners of false money, the offscouring of crime and wretchedness; and here too abided sometimes for years the anointed priests of God, perfecting their souls for martyrdom and often leaving its walls only to die on the gibbet. We have seen how this imprisonment was shared by some of the oldest gentry of the land, and how Mr. Blundell of Crosby died within the castle walls for the heinous crime of sheltering a priest. In all fifteen martyrs here glorified God by giving up their lives in his service.

The roll of those glorious confessors of God's church opened in 1584 with the names of Fr. James Bell and John Finch, a layman. Bell had been a priest for many years when Queen Mary died. He was born in 1524, before the breach between England and the Holy See: before the gospel light was discovered by Henry VIII. in Anne Boleyn's eyes, he had been ordained priest, and had officiated for many years at God's altar. On the change of religion under Queen Elizabeth, he went with the crowd, and conformed to the State creed. He took the oath of supremacy, and acted as a Protestant minister for many years. Words addressed to him by a virtuous matron roused him to a sense of his great sin, and a long and severe sickness gave him time to think. He rose from his sick bed a changed man: he entered on a time of serious reflection and severe penance. He was reconciled to the Church, and henceforth he devoted himself with all the fervour of a convert to the work of saving souls. For two years he laboured with all diligence, and then was apprehended and cast into prison at Manchester. He was sent to Lancaster to be tried at the Lent Assizes in 1584. On his journey his arms were tied behind him, and his legs were fastened together under the horse's belly.

The night before his execution he spent in prayer and meditation, and he died the death of a martyr, displaying not only unshaken constancy, but great joy.

With him died John Finch, a layman, born in Mawdesley, near Croston. He, too, had been a Protestant; he was married and settled in the world, but being convinced of his errors, he became a fervent Catholic, and devoted his life and time to speading the true faith among people. He was apprehended by the Earl of Derby along with a priest named George Ortcliffe, was confined in the gaol at Manchester, and finally, after much patient suffering, won his crown at Lancaster, along with Father James Bell, on the 20th of April, 1584.

These were the Proto-Martyrs of Lancaster. Fr. Bell had been an apostate from the Faith; he had sworn to the Queen's supremacy over God's Church, and had denied the authority of the Holy See, but he was a penitent, and a true one; and it was given to him to wash away the guilt of his sin with the outpouring of his blood. Now he stands before God's throne, and his repentance only adds lustre to his crown of martyrdom. Lancaster had no other martyred priests until the last year of the sixteenth century, but in 1600 Fathers Nutter and Twing won their crowns, and in the following year, 1601, two other priests, Thurstan Hunt and Robert Middleton, suffered with the same constancy, and secured the same triumph. In 1604 Lawrence Baily, a layman, shed his blood for the Faith, in 1628 the famous Fr. Arrowsmith and Robert Hurst, and in 1641 Edward Barlow a Benedictine monk, made the same glorious confession. The roll of honour of God's saints and martyrs at Lancaster ended with the names of Fathers Bamber, Woodcock, a Franciscan, and Whitaker, of Goosnargh and Claughton, in the August of 1646. Queen Elizabeth and James I. had their victims, whom they offered up in the name of Protestantism and religious liberty; though the three last-named martyrs died in the reign of Charles I., their death does not lie at his door, but belongs to the Parliamentary and Puritan party, which at the time was dominant in Lanca-

shire, and thirsted for the blood of Catholics. No other town in England outside the metropolis, except York, can vie with Lancaster in the number of the martyrs who have sanctified its soil with their blood. I am afraid that they have not been honoured as they ought, and that many a Lancaster man in these later days has known but little of these fearless champions of Christ, the great glory of his town. But other times are coming: the historian is turning over the dusty documents of the past, and he is giving to the Lancashire Catholics of to-day the results of his labours. His narrative tells of as heroic resolution, of as unflinching courage, and of as holy lives as can be read of in the history of any age or country. God is glorified in His servants, and the familiar names of common life, of Bell and Bamber, of Finch and Wrenno, now shine with the halo befitting a martyr's head.

Father Thules here had for fellow prisoner in the Castle one Roger Wrenno, or Worren, a weaver by trade, but a devout and zealous soul. It is said that they contrived to make their escape together, but were re-arrested, and more strictly confined to prevent the possibilities of a second attempt at flight. Father Thules found other work ready to his hand. Among the prisoners were four malefactors, who afterwards suffered on the same day with himself. He made friends with them, spoke to them of the enormity of their crimes, and so won their confidence that they listened readily to his instructions. He then talked to them of the means offered by the Catholic Faith to poor sinners to make their peace with God, and so wrought with them that they became true penitents, and were reconciled by him to the Catholic Faith. In this Faith they persevered to the end, and met their death bravely, confessing to the last their belief in the Catholic religion.

The Sheriff of Lancashire in 1616 was Rowland Moseley, a gentleman of the Hundred of Salford. The solemn forms of English law were gone through at the trial. Thules was charged with being a priest and

exercising his priestly functions in this realm. His demeanour was calm and self-possessed, and his replies were given with such judgement and dignity as to extort the admiration of the court; one of the judges who sat upon him at his trial was greatly impressed with his behaviour, and declared in the company of many gentlemen that he had scarce met in all the North of England with a man of so much modesty, prudence and temper. Wrenno was also tried on a charge of felony for assisting and relieving priests. Both were condemned to die, but were offered their lives if they would take the oath of Allegiance to the Queen: both refused the impious oath as contrary to the truth and their conscience. A strange scene then was presented to the astonished eyes of the assembled crowd. Mr. Ashton of Lever, Father Thules' godson, came forward and entreated his old friend to take the oath, offering him £20 a year for his life, if he would only yield. It must have been a trying moment for Father Thules, and he must have been deeply moved by this singular proof of his godson's attachment, but he must obey God rather than man, and he stood firm to his resolution. Perhaps as he gazed on the eager face of the young man, and listened to his earnest entreaty, and heard his generous offer, he found it a harder task to preserve his self-command, than when he confronted the terrors of judge and jury. He could but turn away with beating heart, and breathe a fervent blessing on so sincere a friend. The 18th of March was appointed for the execution of the two confessors of Christ.

Father Thules had another trying ordeal to pass through. The priests who had been his fellow prisoners gathered about him to say goodbye. Even now he did not forget his office as an ambassador of Christ. He knew the trials to which they were still exposed, and he thought not of the fate awaiting himself. His last words were an earnest recommendation to them to practise mutual charity and love, and thus show themselves true followers of their Lord. He was then conducted to the castle gate, and after being bound on a hurdle

was dragged in that painful and ignominious fashion through the streets of the town to the place of execution.

Since the last year of the eighteenth century the dread sentence of the law has been carried out within the precincts of the castle, but previous to 1800 the place of execution was on the eastern side of the town, on what was known as Lancaster Moor. The spot was at the junction of Quernmore and Wyresdale-roads, somewhat over a quarter of a mile in a straight line from the Castle Gate. It is on ground which intervenes between the Workhouse and the roads mentioned, and is within the Workhouse enclosure. To reach it from the castle it was necessary to pass through the entire extent of the city, from west to east. In 1610 a map of Lancaster, by Speed, gives scarcely any houses eastward of Stone Well. The remainder of the way was by Moor-road, now Moor-street, and Park-road. This was, and is, where it has not been changed, a rough and narrow road, more like a bridle path than a road for conveyances. It lay somewhat to the north of the existing East-road, a modern formation, on the east side of which now rises the vast pile of buildings connected with St. Peter's Church, and ran parallel with it. The ground is here at a considerable elevation above the country on the south and west, and commands an extensive view as far as the Irish Sea. To our martyr this journey was indeed a Way of Sorrow, and pain racked every limb as the hurdle on which he was bound jolted on the ill-paved streets and the still rougher bridle path.

The death of Father Thules has been recorded in verse with some minuteness. The poem is one of a collection of Catholic poems and songs, written in a contemporary hand, and preserved in the British Museum. It has been printed by Fr. Pollen in his "Acts of English Martyrs;" and from it we take the following details.

On the way, or when he arrived at the foot of the gallows, our martyr managed to distribute what little money he had left amongst the poorest of those who had gathered together to watch his execution. Then he prepared himself to die. It was indeed a cruel death

that he and his companion had to face. To speak with his poetical biographer:—

"Present before their face
Was fire and cruel flame.

"Then did they them attempt
Their faith for to deny,
Saying they must be hanged
And burnéd cruelly."

Nor was this all. To terrify them the more, three felons were hanged before them. But the courage of our martyrs never quailed. And first it was Father Thule's turn to die. As he ascended the ladder, he was again called upon to save his life by taking the oath; again he refused, saying—"Write me out a form of oath which contains nothing but civil allegiance and I will take it." They told him they could tender no other form than that which was ordered in the Parliamentary Statute. "I cannot in conscience take it," he replied, "for it contains many things contrary to the Catholic Faith."

This was his last trial. He was turned off the ladder, cut down, and his body was quartered. His four quarters were hung up at four chief towns of the county—Lancaster, Preston, Wigan, and Warrington; that at Preston was fixed to the church steeple. His head was set up on the castle walls at Lancaster. Thus triumphed gloriously over the powers of this world, Father Thules, being forty-eight years of age.

His humble companion, Wrenno, was now to share the fate of the priest. He was a stout man; the rope fastened round his neck broke with his weight, and he fell to the ground. At first he was stunned with the fall, but shortly coming to himself he raised himself upon his knees, and lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven he began to pray devoutly. The Protestant ministers present saw their opportunity, and again urged him to take the oath. The good man presently arose, saying—"I am the same man as I was and in the same

mind. Use your pleasure with me." With that he ran to the ladder and went up as fast as he could. The amazement of the onlookers at this unexpected eagerness to die may well be imagined. The Sheriff shared in the general astonishment and cried out—"How now, what does the man mean, that he is in such haste?" But the servant of God replied—"O! if you had seen what I have just now seen, you would be as much in haste to die as I now am." A stronger rope was brought, and put round his neck. The ladder was turned, and he went to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living, of which before he was given a glimpse.

Which of my readers is there who would not rather share the happy death of the poor Lancashire weaver, than the despair and gloom of the great Protestant Queen?

St. Antony of Padua.

(1195—1231.)

By C. Kegan Paul.

Saint Antony of Padua is the Franciscan Friar whose name is perhaps better known throughout the world than any other member of that Order, save only St. Francis himself. We dare not say that he is greatest among them, bearing in mind the words of Thomas à Kempis:

> "Inquire thou not,
> nor dispute concerning the merits of the saints;
> which of them is more holy than the other,
> or which the greater in the kingdom of heaven.
> These things often times breed strifes and unprofitable contentions;
> and nourish pride and vainglory, whence arise envy and dissentions:
> whilst one man seeks to exalt this saint;
> and another man another."

But we cannot ignore facts, and it is plain as the sun in heaven, that Almighty God singled out St. Antony to manifest His power to the world, and called him to be the especial wonder-worker of the Order which was his final choice, and in which he died.

The ways of God are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts, and it might be that when they are strange and unusual our duty were simply to admire and adore. But since order would appear to be a necessary part of Himself, we find a law running through those of His most unusual, and, in the strict sense of the word, most eccentric manifestations.

Miracle forms part of the life of a saint, and the Church has, at least for many centuries, required proof of miracles as one of the conditions of canonization, so that miraculous power and sanctity invariably accompany each other. But in the vast majority of the Saints we dwell on the sanctity and forget the miracle; we remember St. Augustine for his Confessions, St. Ignatius for his Spiritual Exercises, St. Francis de Sales for his Counsels to those living in the world. In some cases, as in that of the Seven Founders of the Servite Order, in that of the Japanese Martyrs, and in that of the English who suffered under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, those who were so lovely in their lives in death were not divided, it is not always possible to ascribe this or that miracle to a definite name; the deeds and the invocation are alike collective.

There are again others not necessarily less, nor necessarily more, holy than they, in whose case miracle is forced upon us, who have passed through life attended by a storm of miracles, being in very fact like the fable of the poet:

> "Where'er you walk cool gales shall fan the glade,
> Trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade."

Wonder clings to them, as, in the natural order, some men have gifts of healing, others of statesmanship, others of command, of eloquence or of literature; and we not unreasonably ask whether there be any law for such a gift.

We find that God has given a special and pre-eminent wonder-worker once at least to each of the great Orders of Religious whom He has called to serve Him, and that in each case He has attached the gift not so much to the Founder, as to one who came near him and had caught much of his spirit.

Thus among the Benedictines, St. Maurus was distinguished alike for his miracles and his holiness, through sixty years of his life of seventy-four years. Thus St. Nicholas of Tolentino showed forth in an especial manner the power of God in the austere order of the

Hermits of St. Augustine. Thus St. Vincent Ferrer sealed by his wondrous works the power of God on the sons of St. Dominic. So too St. Peregrine Laziosi among the Servites. St. Francis Xavier among the Jesuits, and in the eighteenth century B. Gerard Majella among the more recent Redemptorists, as St. Antony among the Franciscans, were evidence of God's approbation on the Orders to which they severally belonged. It might be tedious, and alien to our special intention, to follow out this in detail, but it would not be difficult to do so in the case of every eminent Order and Congregation. That certain Orders have arisen near each other in time, thus causing the appearance of wonder-working Saints in groups, is just what we might expect when we study the phenomena of miracles. Those recorded in the Bible lay down, as it were, the rule, and we therein find whole tracts of years without supernatural intervention; then on a sudden are large clusters of strange events wrought by the power of God, through the hands of men. When God's people were to be delivered from Egypt, and led into the Promised Land; when He would give His sanction to the Prophetic Order; when His Church was founded; then to Moses and Aaron: to Elias and Eliseus; to Peter and Paul were given the kind of powers that St. Antony and St. Peregrine Laziosi, St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Francis Xavier, possessed in later ages.

In the spiritual world as in this, there are peculiarities of gifts, characters, temperaments; sanctity does not reduce or elevate the blessed to one level. "Some saints can help us in one trouble, others in another," wrote St. Teresa; we may go further and say, that as here below the dominant note of one character is authority, of another sympathy, of another a bright and affectionate playfulness; so the wonders wrought after death by St. Winifred, by St. Edmund Rich, by St. Philomena, show differences of character as clearly as if they were still alive. There are many-sided men in this life, and in the life beyond the veil: such an one was he of whom we now consider the saintliness and the marvels.

Ferdinand de Buglione, as was his name in the world by birth and baptism, was born at Lisbon in the year 1195. His parents were noble and wealthy, and the boy received an education such as became his rank, at the Cathedral School. It is sometimes said that the dedication of the Cathedral to our Lady was the cause of his singular devotion towards her; but, without this special reason it would indeed have been strange if he, who was to prove so holy, had not always been a faithful client of the Queen of Saints. There was, however, a Sodality or Confraternity of our Lady connected with the Cathedral, and of this he was a member. In after years his fellow-sodalists vested his image year by year in red cassock and cotta, such as he had been wont to wear at her altar when a boy.

At the age of fifteen he became a novice with the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, that Congregation of which Thomas à Kempis was so great an ornament. Their house was just outside the gates of Lisbon, too near home to allow him to be wholly free from distraction; he therefore asked for and obtained his transfer to Coimbra, and here at the age of seventeen he was able to give himself entirely to a life of study, solitude and prayer. Not, however, with these Religious had he found his true vocation. In the "Imitation of Christ" is a well-known passage wherein Thomas recognizes that blessed as was the life of the Canons Regular there were Religious who led stricter lives than they. He does not mention the Franciscans indeed, only the Carthusians and the Cistercians; but the Franciscans were no doubt in his mind among "the monks and nuns of divers orders."

The Franciscan Order was founded in the beginning of the thirteenth century, which may be called the heart of the Middle Ages, soon after that of St. Dominic, not long before that of the Servants of Mary. The times stood sorely in need of these three austere bodies; for the great light of faith which streamed on the world in the Ages of Faith was attended with correspond-

ing dark shadows. The Cathari, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and other sectaries less well-known by name, assailed both faith and morals, while Italy, and indeed the whole empire, was torn asunder by the bloody feuds of Guelf and Ghibelline. The Moors were still, and even up to the battle of Lepanto in 1571, an abiding danger to Europe; in the days of St. Francis much of Spain was actually under their sway. Among his daring plans was that of a Crusade by wholly spiritual arms, and he designed two expeditions, one starting from Ancona for Egypt, the other destined for Seville and Granada. This band of brethren passed into Morocco, where, though the Sultan Miramolino was converted, five of them laid down their lives for the faith. Their bodies, ransomed at great price, were brought to Coimbra, where miracles signalized the place of their rest. In order to win like them a martyr's death, Ferdinand assumed the Franciscan habit in the Chapel of St. Antony, patriarch of monks, whose patronage and name he adopted. An early writer of St. Antony's life has this odd simile, that "so soon as the deaths of the martyrs reached his ears, he, like an elephant who has seen blood, became wholly full of the desire of battle, and carried away by the fervour of faith." He was then twenty-six years of age.

Keeping ever before him the end with which he had become a Franciscan, he asked and obtained permission to go on the Mission to Morocco, and actually set sail in a merchant vessel, with a manuscript Bible and a crucifix as his only possessions. The ship in which he sailed was obliged through stress of weather to put into Messina, where he learnt that St. Francis was holding a Chapter of the Order at Assisi. Thither therefore he proceeded and received the blessing of his Father in God.

The failure of this voyage was succeeded by so serious an attack of illness that he recognized the missionary life to be impossible, and, in his zeal for mortification, entreated that he might not again return to Portugal,

but rather enter as a lay brother into some Italian monastery. Even this was difficult for reasons of health, but he finally found a home in a small convent near Bologna. There he passed his days in the humblest duties of a lay brother, spending all his free time in a lonely grotto, where he gave himself to penance and to prayer. None knew, and apparently the Guardian alone suspected, that a Saint was among them. Each might have cried with Cardinal Newman:

> "I saw thee once, and nought discerned
> For stranger to admire;
> A serious aspect, but it burned
> With no unearthly fire.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I saw once more, and awe-struck gazed
> On face and form and air;
> God's living glory round thee blazed—
> A Saint—a Saint was there."

The manifestation of the glory of God came, as we should lightly say, by accident, though there are no accidents in the province of God. The Bishop of Forli held an ordination, where certain Dominicans were the guests of the Franciscans, with Antony and others of the Order from distant convents, who were to receive the Sacrament of Order. The sons of St. Dominic were naturally asked to take on them, here also, the office of preacher, but none was prepared, and the Guardian, moved by some divine instinct, commanded Antony on his obedience to speak to the assembled congregation; though, as he pointed out, he considered himself far more fitted to wash the kitchen utensils. His sermon was simple, but was yet a revelation of the power and the sanctity of his word.

St. Francis, on hearing what had happened, determined that he should study theology, and become a Professor of that science, as well as take upon himself the office of public preacher; the first essay having been

made among his brethren only. He wrote in few but pregnant words to Antony.

"To his dear Brother Antony, Brother Francis, in Jesus Christ, greeting. I find it good that you should interpret to the Brethren the books of sacred theology, yet in such sort as I enjoin you above all things, that the work of study deaden not in you, nor in them, the spirit of holy prayer, as is laid down in the Rule which we profess. The Lord be with you."

In accordance with this direction he taught in Montpelier, Bologna, Padua, and Toulouse, while his preaching tours embraced the whole of Southern France, Sicily and Romagna, especially Rome and Padua. The effects of his eloquence both in the reform of manners and of doctrine seem to have been extraordinary; it was, men said, as though another Elias or St. John Baptist had arisen. As a preacher he had great natural gifts. His health became re-established: it may have been through the physical impossibility of those mortifications and penances which had been so dear to him when his life as a lay brother could be hidden from men; his frame grew robust, and not easily subdued by fatigue, his voice was sonorous and of musical quality. His memory was wonderful, and it was said of him that he knew so well the text of Holy Scripture, that, another Esdras, he could have reproduced it, had the existing copies been lost. Therefore Pope Gregory IX. called him the Ark of the Covenant, because as the Ark contained the two tables of the Law, so he held in his memory the whole of the Old and New Testaments.

The supernatural gifts, with which Antony was in so large a measure endowed, came first into notice in connection with the exercise of preaching. First among these was the gift of tongues, and this was manifested in two ways. He was understood by persons in other languages than that in which he actually spoke, and again he was able to preach in Italian and in French, as though he had studied those languages profoundly,

instead of having a very elementary knowledge of them. But more than this: the power of his voice was raised to a supernatural degree. A woman to whom her husband refused his consent that she should attend Antony's preaching, heard his words plainly at the distance of a league; the husband also heard them, and was converted. Once in the midst of his discourse a violent storm came on, the rain fell all round the crowd of hearers, but no drop amongst those who remained at his bidding. To his brethren, when he was preaching in a Chapter at Arles, a vision of St. Francis, then alive in Italy, appeared, giving his blessing to the assembly, while Antony extolled the sanctity of their profession, and urged the exact and inviolate observance of the Rule.

Women who attended on his ministry, with a too great carelessness to their home duties were saved, because of their piety and faith, from the consequence of their want of heed. One had left her infant alone to fall into a pan of boiling water, but found the baby playing unhurt in the terrible bath. Another, on her return from the sermon, found her child dead. She ran to the preacher to implore his aid, and was sent away with the words of our Lord in the Gospel: "Go thy way, thy son liveth," to find on her return the child alive again and playing with his companions. And yet another, who, in her eagerness to carry a cup of wine for Antony's refreshment, forgot to turn the spigot, so that all the contents of the barrel were poured out, no sooner had closed the orifice than the vessel was full again to overflowing. It is not for us to say that the latter miracle is trivial and the former great, in face of the Lord's words that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's will: we must also remember that in this Antony reproduced the deed of that great Saint of the Old Testament, who healed the son of the widow in Sarephta, yet condescended to refill the pot of meal and replenish the cruse of oil, from day to day during the famine. There is no small nor great with God; His are the issues of life and death; but He is the sole and ultimate dispenser of daily bread, whether He give it mediately or immediately.

Stranger things were yet to be, if, when all is so wonderful, we may venture to compare. The Saint appeared simultaneously in very distant places. At Montpelier, at Limoges, while preaching, he was seen and heard to sing, now the gradual, now the ninth lesson of Matins in his own monastery; thus repeating the miracle of St. Ambrose, who while saying Mass at Milan seemed to fall asleep at the Altar, and was seen at the same hour assisting at the funeral of St. Martin at Tours.

In this manner Antony was twice transported from Padua to Lisbon to aid his father, whom, save thus, he was never to see again. In his father's garden a young man was found murdered, and the household were accused of the crime. But the Saint, warned of God of the danger, was borne by an angel to the court in which Martin de Buglione was arraigned. There he adjured the corpse, who sat up and declared the accused were guiltless, and having said this, again slept in death. At night the angel bore him back again to his monastery in Padua. Again, and in the same manner he was carried to Lisbon, to help his father in a civil suit. It is recorded that though he was to be the recipient of so wonderful a favour, he asked and obtained permission from the Guardian, according to rule, before he ventured to leave the convent.

It will be noticed that this is the very class of miracle that Satan in these later days imitates with skill, just as when Moses and Aaron wrought wonders before Pharao, Jannes and Mambres did the same with their enchantments.

Even in this wonder, however, God did not depart from His law of miracle; that is, He laid down once for all in the Old Testament certain classes of miracle which He repeated in the New, and again in ecclesiastical miracles. Habacuc was carried by an angel from Judæa to Babylon that he might bear food to Daniel in the lions' den. St. Philip, the deacon, was miraculously conveyed from the desert near Jerusalem to Azotus, after the baptism of the Ethiopian; there are probably

no miracles of the new dispensation which had not their prototypes in the old.

St. Antony also had in a large measure the gift of prophecy. We are sometimes apt to forget that a gift once bestowed by God on His Church is never again withdrawn, though its manifestations may from time to time be in abeyance. No doubt, however, just as the abundance of miracles which attended the promulgation of Christianity has induced some Protestants to declare that they ceased with the Apostolic age, so the existence of whole schools of prophecy and the gathering together of whole books of predictions, under the Jewish dispensation, has blinded even Catholics to the existence of the power in the Christian Church. St. Antony had the gift in its fulness, and in both its forms, that of inspired preaching and prediction of the future. Before one steeped in pleasures of the flesh, for whom nothing seemed less likely than a holy life and a holy death, Antony was accustomed to uncover his head and genuflect. He taking this for mere mockery was enraged, but the Saint told him he did so because God had revealed to him the martyrdom of this present sinner. "Then," said he, "you will remember me." He was converted long afterwards and died a holy death for Christ, in torment among the Saracens.

For the number of miraculous events, both great and trivial, many volumes would hardly find space; the powers of nature seemed to wait upon, and to be altered at his will. For instance; the Saint quoted to one, who had kicked his mother, the words: "If thy foot scandalize thee cut it off." The penitent, taking the words literally, thus mutilated himself with a hatchet. Antony uniting the severed limb made over it the sign of the Cross, and the foot was restored whole as the other. But in a slighter, and, as it were, playful manner, the mere invocation of his name removed all traces of dirt from the dress of a great lady, who on her way to hear his sermon had fallen into a mud heap.

These were miracles of beneficence. But there were

those in which the Saint, so gentle, so tender-hearted, had yet to declare God's awfulness when He is slighted. Preaching on the text "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also," he told the terrible tale that one dead in that city and buried, was suffering the just reward of his avarice. "Go," he said to those who could in their consciences identify him of whom he spoke, "Go and open his money-box, and you will find the heart of him whose body lies in the grave." They went, and found the usurer's heart still warm amidst the chilly gold.

Like Saint Philip Neri in later days, his power of reading the heart was wonderful, and with this he set great value upon the Sacrament of Penance. He not only urged it in his sermons and privately in person, but so great was his zeal for souls that he was even transported as it were out of himself, and sought sinners in vision. His early biographer says of him: "While the man of God was yet alive, penitents were wont to come to the Brethren, and declare that the Saint had appeared to them as they lay in bed, saying, 'Rise, Martin,' or 'Rise, Agnes, and go to such a Brother confessing such and such a sin,' committed in such and such a place, which God alone knew."

His greatest power over nature was shown in confirmation of sacred doctrine. When we speak of the ages of faith, it must not be forgotten that the same were ages of heresy also, and a pessimist of these days, face to face with the denial of God, as well as with the thousand heresies which veil themselves under forms of religion, may take note that by the side of the sanctity of Antony, Francis, and Dominic, went the uncleanness and false doctrine of the Cathari, absolute atheism, and that modified but deadly denial of God which derided His real presence in the Blessed Eucharist. So strong was his protest against all false teaching that he was known as *Malleus hæreticorum*—the hammer of heretics. In relation to the Blessed Sacrament, it is told that when preaching at Toulouse, a blasphemous Jew said

that he too would believe, if his mule, after a three days' fast, would turn aside from hay and corn, to adore the Sacred Host. The Saint, with daring faith, accepted the agreement, and the mule adored, to the confusion, and happily the conversion, of the Jew and his followers. Again we appeal to Holy Scripture. Those only will smile or scoff who reject the miracle which was wrought on Balaam, when as St. Peter puts it, "the dumb beast speaking with man's voice forbade the folly of the prophet."

At Rimini, when the hearts of his hearers were hardened, and those who had come to hear stopped their ears, he went to the mouth of the Mareccia, and called on the fish of the river and sea to hear him. They did so, crowding together where land and water met, while he spoke ending in the words of the song of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael: "O ye whales and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord." Again, let those smile who deny that at a given hour the Saviour called a great multitude of fish where none were before, and brought them into that net which the disciples had constantly let down all the night, and had taken nothing. Once more we may say with emphasis: What God has done once, and His Spirit has recorded in the Sacred Scriptures by the pen of man, He does again at intervals through the ages; so that as the furniture of His material temple was made after the pattern He had shown to Moses in the Mount, the spiritual furniture, so to speak, of His Saints, their equipment to win the souls of men, is made after the pattern on which He had set His seal, in that dispensation wherein He had given His earliest revelation.

But though some heretics heard the Saint with awe, and, under stress of his miracles, amended the errors of their ways, there were others who were less easily converted and attempted to poison his food; but here also the sign of the Cross over the viands made him a sharer of that promise of our Lord: "If they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

All these occurrences were so many signs from God of the holiness of his servant. But a greater remained. It is that which is so constantly represented in the portraits of the Saint. When on a visit in the South of France, his host on entering his chamber, saw him in prayer, but a lovely child stood by him, and caressed him; the Child Jesus thus manifested His love to one who loved Him with a child's innocence and simplicity.

In the cases of those Saints to whom our Lord has vouchsafed to reveal Himself, there seems to be again a law that as is the recipient so is the vision: St. Francis who desired to suffer for all, saw his Saviour crucified and received from him the stigmata of His Passion; St Margaret Mary, all burning with love, saw Jesus' heart aflame, and ever bore about within herself, thereafter, that heart of fire; St. Antony, whose child's heart still beat within the man's, had most affinity with, and therefore saw, Jesus as a child.

By his absolute simplicity and innocence he moved among dangerous men, when others would scarce have dared do so; he opposed Eccelin, known to all time as the tyrant of Padua, excommunicated by Alexander IV. for his atrocities, branded for ever in Dante's Inferno. After a massacre at Verona the Saint adjured him thus. "How long, cruel tyrant, wilt thou shed blood? Knowest thou not that the vengeance of God is ready, that His sword is raised, and will surely smite, unless thou dost penance." So astonished was Eccelin, that he cast himself at the Saint's feet in submission and confession. How far this availed for the salvation of his own soul at the end none can know: he died in battle against the Guelfs; but at the time the horrors he wrought were assuaged, and he himself bare witness that he was subdued by the rays of light which darted from Antony's face, and by his immediate expectation of being thrust down into hell.

Few things are more difficult to reconcile than the life of the cloister and the life of the world. Perhaps in these later days the incongruity of two conflicting duties

was most marked in the case of Father Burke the great Dominican; here mentioned, because in a narrative of our own time which may be read of all, it is clear that the real life was that of the cell, the other, however evident, was but a purple patch on the garment of simple devotion. Antony was before all things a good monk, who ever returned gladly to obedience, solitude and silence. It came to him as a call from God to oppose Brother Elias the successor of St. Francis, who even so early in the history of the Order encouraged dangerous laxity. He treated St. Antony at once as turbulent and seditious, and would have cast him into prison had not St. Antony appealed to the Holy See, by whom he was supported and Elias deposed. Then he gladly laid down his offices—he had been Provincial of Romagna—and retired to the strictest solitude he could find, to live the monastic life in its entirety, and prepare his soul for God. And this all the more, because he felt how much of stain his soul might have contracted from that world with which the Love of God and his neighbours had caused him to come in contact.

His sojourn in the desert was of no long duration, for he rapidly grew weak, and knew by revelation that the hour drew near, in which he should die at Padua. Accompanied by Brother Roger he set out for that town, but as the carriage approached, a monk, who had gone out to meet it, seeing his feeble state, had him carried into the Chaplain's house, attached to the Convent of the Poor Clares. There, feeling his end at hand, after confession and absolution he said the hymn *O gloriosa Domina*, then, looking intently upwards, he said "I see my Lord." The Brethren brought the holy oil of of unction; and he said: "I have an unction within me; nevertheless, though outward anointing be not necessary, it is well, and good for me." Then he said the Penitential Psalms, making the responses even to the end, and died as one who gently falls asleep. His death took place on June 15th, 1231, five years after his father St. Francis. He was but thirty-six years old, and he had been ten years a Franciscan.

Again a miracle. The Brethren, fearing the concourse of people, desired to keep his death a secret for a while; but scarcely was he deceased, when the children of Padua, as by a divine impulse, and at no man's bidding or information, began at once to cry "Our Father is dead; St. Antony is dead;" and a vast concourse went out to the Chaplain's house, where a strife arose about the place of his sepulture. The Poor Clares naturally desired that his body should lie where it fell, and their lay neighbours were ready to take up arms against its removal; on the other hand the brethren within the walls wished him to lie in his own house. The Bishop decided in favour of the latter course, and thither the body was borne into Padua with all possible honour. His soul had already passed to Paradise, the Saint having appeared to the Abbot of Vercelli at the moment of death, and communicated to him this happy tidings.

So great was the number of miracles which adorned his tomb, that Gregory IX. to whom he had been personally known, set his canonization on foot at once, and the process was completed in the following year. The canonization took place at Spoleto in Italy, and at the moment the decree was pronounced we are told that all the bells in Lisbon rang of their own accord, while men and women burst into shouts of joy, though as yet unconscious of the cause of their gladness.

Thirty-two years after his death, Antony's sacred relics were translated to a magnificent church still standing, which the inhabitants of Padua had built in his honour. His body had fallen into that customary decay which awaits our frail human flesh, the tongue alone remained incorrupt, red as in life. St. Bonaventure, then General of the Franciscans, assisted at the translation. Taking the holy relic in his hands, he said: "O blessed tongue who didst always praise God, who didst work so well that others might praise Him, now your merits are plain to all the world, and you receive the recompense of Him who created you for so glorious a work." The tongue

is still incorrupt, still to be seen, a most treasured relic.

When a Saint is invoked, it is only by degrees that we can discover what has been given him as his special work in the economy of the spiritual kingdom; it may be that we shall never know the reason why Almighty God has given this or that power of protection or patronage to one or another. But time tries these things, and in case of each Saint it is found by degrees that such and such invocations are specially answered. St. Antony is the special helper of those who have lost any objects they value, and there is never lacking a number of persons who have in this respect found his aid. Perhaps the most standing wonder of his life in heaven is this, his patronage in regard to lost things. His privilege in this respect seems unique and abnormal. It has been said of him, that it would almost seem as if Almighty God, having to leave our prayers so often seemingly unanswered, had taken this means to enable us to appreciate the reality of His Providence, giving to St. Antony in things apparently trivial a sort of free hand. To women in labour, to travellers, and especially to those in danger of shipwreck, he is found a great and powerful protector.

But space would fail to tell here of the stupendous miracles which attend St. Antony's invocation, as well as, if we may so call them, his more playful miracles; the great show kindness in what seems trifling, smaller miracles are indications of smiles not on the Saint's brow alone, but on the face of Our Father who is in heaven. The clients of St. Antony alone know the intensity of his love now, as in his life-time, for them; how watchful he is, how ready to give and how prompt to pray: Therefore we too say:

Sancte Antoni Patavine, ora pro nobis.
Saint Antony of Padua, pray for us.

THE SEVEN HOLY FOUNDERS OF THE SERVITE ORDER.

By C. Kegan Paul.

The Order of Servites, or Servants of Mary, is an order of friars, who follow the rule of Saint Augustine. It was instituted in Italy in the thirteenth century by seven rich men of Florence, and has for its special object meditation on the Dolours of the most holy Virgin, that its members may feel and share them with her, and propagate this devotion among the faithful.

The coming of the Friars marks the very heart of the Middle Ages. St. Dominic was born in 1170, St. Francis in 1182, St. Bonfilius, the eldest of the Servites, in 1198; and the special task of each of the three Orders was closely allied to those of the others. St. Dominic took the doctrine of Christ as his charge, to preach it everywhere, and set it forth in all its splendour; St. Francis embraced Christian morality, to practise it in all its heroism, and show the inexpressible sweetness which underlay its most austere observances. The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order, like loving and tender children, devoted themselves to her, who had borne Christ Himself in her immaculate bosom, Christ, source of all truth and principle of all good; to her, the inseparable coadjutrix of Jesus in the redemption of souls; to her who gave to the world the Word full of grace and truth, the Saviour sacrificed in His infinite love for the salvation and the blessing of all men.

Thus while St. Dominic and St. Francis manifested

Christ to those eager to know and to love Him, the seven Saints of Florence showed forth the sweet and radiant face of the Virgin, the Mother who from Bethlehem to Calvary encircles with the aureole of her love Him who wrought the glory of God, who is the Conqueror of souls.

Innocent III. was in the chair of St. Peter, keeping a brave heart among the many distractions of the Christian world. Germany was a prey to civil war between the Emperor Otho IV. and Philip of Swabia; France was under the glorious rule of Philip Augustus who, having returned from the third Crusade, conquered Normandy, Maine, Anjou and Poitou, but showed himself a true son of the Church in submitting wholly to Innocent in the question of his marriage, having wished to repudiate his wife Ingeburge. Not so John in England, more disloyal to the Holy See than any King of England, till he arose who brought about the great apostacy. Spain was in the agony of the Mahomedan invasion. In the East, Jerusalem had again fallen into the power of the Infidel, and the Pope incited and arranged the fourth Crusade. But the Eastern Empire alone fell, and the Holy Places were not freed.

Coming nearer to his own realm, the Pope looked out on a stormy and distracted land. Except the States of the Church and the kingdom of Sicily, then under a Regency, all the important towns were at strife with their neighbours, either forming round them independent communes, or becoming the centres of small republics. They lived in a state of perpetual feud, happy only if they had peace within their own borders, as Florence had for the moment. Later, in Dante's time, who probably knew some of the early Servite Saints, there were no less than seven intrenched camps belonging to different factions within the City of Florence itself. Though of course politically divided

by the two great parties, the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, their dissensions were but political; war with those without had not become civil war.

The Church and the offices of religion constituted the whirlwind's heart of peace, and the many confraternities to which pious laymen belonged, brought men together, who would not otherwise have known each other, of all opinions and all stations. In them, Guelf and Ghibelline, merchant and prince, met on an equal footing. Such a Confraternity was that of the "Laudesi," or the Elder Society of Our Blessed Lady, founded in the year 1183. It was in fact just such a confraternity or sodality as we now know, mainly in connection with Jesuit churches, and under one of the titles of Our Lady. It was composed of the nobles and merchants of Florence, and met at the church of Santa Reparata. In the year 1233, just fifty years after its foundation, it numbered two hundred members, all of the best families in Florence, and was under the direction of a young priest, James of Poggibonsi.

Of these two hundred members, seven became the saintly founders of the Servite Order, and the Confraternity of the Laudesi was, in the good providence of God, to serve as their noviciate.

Bonfilius Monaldi was the eldest. He was born in 1198, the year of the election of Innocent III. The Monaldeschi, for such was the original name, were of French extraction, related to the royal House of Anjou. What may have been his occupation in the world is not known, but he was noted as being a young man of prayerful and ascetic life, who took the lead among his friends in all exercises of piety, so that, as soon as there was question among them of community life, they turned to him as their natural superior. He retained in religion his baptismal name.

Alexis Falconieri was born in 1200, of a noble family, originally of Fiesole, but long settled in Florence. He was the eldest son of Bernard Falconieri, a knight, and one of the merchant princes who created the greatness of his native city. The family were all strong adherents of the Pope, and opponents of the Emperor, in their unhappy quarrels. He made his course at the University, studying what were then known as the Humanities, Latin and Greek, the usual classical course, as well as belles lettres, with great success; but he was marked as especially prayerful, fond of reading religious books, and avoiding general society. At an early age he vowed himself to celibacy long before he knew what outward form his life would take. He never became a priest, but remained all his life Brother Alexis, he also keeping his own name.

Benedict de l'Antella was born in 1203, of a wealthy family, of foreign, perhaps German, or, as some think, Eastern extraction, who, long settled at Antella, had but recently come into Florence and become bankers. Benedict was extremely well educated, of very remarkable beauty, and called on by his position to mix much in society. He was afterwards known in religion as Father Manettus.

Bartholomew Amidei was born in 1204, of one of the oldest, richest, and most powerful families of the City. He claimed to be ancient Roman by origin. The Amidei were Ghibellines, and that Bartholomew received a most Christian education is among the many proofs that the bitter political strifes of the age were merely political, and hindered neither side from being good Catholics. His family, who lived much in the world, allowed him to follow a secluded and religious life, which found its natural development in a religious Order. He took in religion his family, rather than his baptismal, name.

Ricovero Uguccioni was born in the same year as Amidei, of a family both noble and mercantile. The lad was from a very early age remarkable for obedience, compassion for the poor, and love of solitude; he was devoted to pious reading, yet none the less was a leader among his young companions who looked to him in all things. In religion he was known as Hugh.

Gherardino Sostegni was born in 1205, of good family, but beyond this little is known of his worldly state. In religion he bore his family name Sostegni.

John Manetti was born in 1206; of the higher ranks of the Florentine aristocracy, both in birth and riches. In religion he was afterwards known as Fr. Buonagiunta, or Bienvenu.

Of these seven the eldest was thirty-four, the youngest about twenty-seven, when their great change in life came to them. They lived in various quarters of the city, they held divers views on politics, their one bond of union was the confraternity of Our Lady, though some among them knew one or two others with more or less intimacy. Monaldi, Amidei, Sostegni and Manetti were married, but Monaldi and perhaps another had already become widowers. Alexis Falconieri alone had, as has been said, taken a vow, but Antella and Uguccioni showed plainly to their families that their wishes tended in the same direction. There were many reasons why even those who sought after perfection should in Italy, and at that time, enter into the marriage state. The Cathari, a sect of heretics who had great success in Florence, made light of marriage, and under pretence of purity were grossly immoral. It was as necessary to uphold true purity by affording examples of holy married life, as of celibacy. But whether married, widowed, or single, these seven were especially eager after a life of perfection, in which they were aided, and to which they were stimulated, by their director.

No new development in the Church of God is sudden; and it had come to pass that Gregory IX. in his pontificate gave special favour to two devotions, afterwards to be so closely associated with the servants of Mary. These were the *Angelus* and the *Salve Regina*. In 1230 Ardingo de Forasboschi became Bishop of Florence, himself a native of the city, and belonging to one of the great Guelf families. Both on religious and on social grounds he had an especial affection to the Laudesi, and its members.

On the Feast of the Assumption, August, 15 1233, these seven young men, with other members of the Laudesi, having confessed and communicated, were each and all making their thanksgiving after Mass. Each, unknown to those about them, fell into an ecstasy. Each seemed to himself surrounded by supernatural light, in the midst of which Our Lady appeared to them accompanied by angels, who spoke to each of them the words; "Leave the world, retire together into solitude, that you may fight against yourselves, and live wholly for God. You will thus experience heavenly consolations. My protection and assistance will never fail you."

The vision faded, the congregation dispersed, only the Seven remained, each meditating what the vision might mean. Bonfilius Monaldi, as the eldest, did violence to his humility and broke the silence. He told what had befallen him, and that he was ready to obey Our Lady's call. Each in order recounted the same experiences, and the same resolve.

As Monaldi had been the first to speak, so the little band at once decided that he must be the first to act; they looked to him for guidance. He decided to seek counsel of their director, James of Poggibonsi, who concluded that was no mere fancy of pious youths, but a fact, a call from their Mother, manifesting to them the will of God, to be obeyed without hesitation. Some were

engaged in business, some in offices of state, four had family ties, which it was not easy to break, especially since the Church suffers no married man or woman to enter into religion unless the other party to the marriage contract does so too. It is believed that the two wives who still lived became afterwards Tertiaries of the Order; at any rate the conditions were at the time fulfilled, all social and worldly arrangements were made; and by the eighth of September, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, they were free to obey, they had stripped themselves of all that bound them to the world.

Meantime, and while waiting to know the further will of God, Monaldi and their director sketched out a plan of community life. They adopted a habit of grey wool, with a leathern cincture, and found a house just outside the city walls, where they might pass much of their time in solitude and prayer, yet near enough to the city to give an example to those they had so lately left. All this was done with the approval of the Bishop; although there was as yet no notion of a new Order; it was merely a question of certain men living a mortified life in community; he granted permission to James to live with them as their chaplain, to celebrate Mass in their oratory, and to reserve the Blessed Sacrament.

So soon as their life arranged itself, and Monaldi was formally elected as their Superior, they desired to submit themselves to the Bishop for his blessing. He wished to see the whole Brotherhood. Their entry into Florence was a strange contrast to what they had seemed a few days before, a band of rich young men in all the splendour of the dress of those days. Their appearance drew a crowd of sympathizers, of men indifferent and curious, of former companions, and of some who, recognizing their great renunciation and sanctity, pressed to touch their garments, to kiss their hands and entreat their blessing.

Suddenly, from the midst of the crowd, were heard the voices of children who cried: "Ecco, ecco i Servi di Maria:" "See, the Servants of Mary." The same exclamation was made still more wonderfully on the following thirteenth of January, when, as two of the Brethren, Falconieri and Manetti, were asking charity in the city, again infants in arms gave them their title. One of these children was Philip Benizi, afterwards to be one of the greatest Saints of the Order and its General. He was then only five months old, and spoke for the first time in crying "Mother, those are Mary's Servants, give them an alms." They had by this time, with the approbation of their Bishop, entered on a community life of mendicancy, devoting themselves especially to Our Lady, to whose honour they reserved Saturday in each week. The habitation without the city walls which had seemed to them at first so solitary, and so fitted for an eremitical life became soon thronged by troops of citizens, curious to see the recipients of so great favours; and they therefore began to say among themselves that they were not wholly obedient to the voice which had said as plainly as to the disciples of old "Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest awhile."

There is a windy mountain ten miles to the north of Florence, a spur of the Apennines, lonely and savage; this again was manifested to each of them in a vision as the place of their future abode; while at the same time a voice, sweet and sonorous, distinct yet mysterious, told them that this mountain was called Monte Senario, that on its height they were to dwell, and apply themselves to yet greater austerity; that in this more rigorous and secluded life they might count always on the favour and succour of the Mother of God.

Monte Senario was part of the episcopal domain of Florence, and the Bishop willingly granted to the soli-

taries the territory whereon they desired to settle. They went without delay from the house wherein they had rested nine months. At dawn of day, after receiving Holy Communion from their director, they skirted the walls of Florence in procession, carrying the Cross before them, and the image of the Blessed Virgin which had stood in their oratory. They climbed the mountain fasting, for it was the vigil of the Ascension; they grounded the Cross, and set down the statue of Our Lady to make their evening prayer, unconscious where they could lay their heads, or even if and how they might raise a shelter for the Blessed Sacrament after the Feast of the morrow. They succeeded however in building a small shelter of boughs as a chapel, and so passed the last day of May, 1234. Their simple monastery, or rather hermitage, was built before the end of the same year; they dwelling till then in caves and crevices of the rocks.

In this monastery they followed a mixture of hermit and community life, broken only by visits of two of their number each week to Florence in quest of alms, and by the acquisition of a small house of refuge in which they might shelter if fatigue or nightfall rendered it impossible for them to regain Monte Senario. Their lives were one unceasing round of austerity and devotion, but their future was still uncertain; they had not ventured to form themselves into a religious Order, though encouraged to do so by their Bishop. They waited and prayed, and in their perplexity they asked a sign. It was given them somewhat as one was given to the Prophet Jonas when his gourd grew up in a night.

Just below the crest of the mountain to the south, where there was some depth of richer soil, the hermits had planted a vine. On the 3rd Sunday in Lent, February 27, 1239, the Brethren saw their vine

clothed with green leaves and clusters of ripe grapes. All around smiled the verdure of spring, and the scent of flowers filled the air. They dared not interpret the prodigy. The superior despatched one of the community to tell to the Bishop the amazing news, and beg that he would give them counsel, for not only was he a man of most holy life, but one to whom also supernatural communication had already been vouchsafed.

To him in a dream heaven revealed the interpretation of the prodigy. The seven hermits were seven branches of the mystic vine, the clusters were those who should join themselves to the Order; the Brethren were again, though as Religious, to mingle in the world. As always they obeyed the divine voice, however given; Easter was near at hand, when they would open their ranks to those who came, till then they would give themselves to earnest prayer.

On Good Friday, April 13, 1240, which that year coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation, all for which the Seven Holy Founders had been preparing found its explanation. On the evening of that day, in their oratory, Our Lady once more appeared to them in a vision, surrounded by angels who bore in their hands religious habits of black, a book containing the Rule of St. Augustine, the title Servants of Mary written in letters of gold, and a palm branch. Then holding in her own hands the habit with which she seemed to clothe each of them; she said: "I come, Servants well beloved and elect, I come to accomplish your desires and grant your prayers; here are the habits in which I wish you should in future be clothed; their black hue should always bring to mind the cruel Dolours which I felt by reason of the Crucifixion and Death of my only Son; the Rule of St. Augustine, which I give you as the form of your Religious Life, will gain for you the palm prepared in heaven, if you serve me faithfully on earth." The vision vanished,

and the foundation of the Servite Order was definitely accomplished.

But this was not all. Our Lady at the same hour appeared to the Bishop of Florence, and made to him the same communication. He gladly went to Monte Senario for their Clothing, and erected them so far as rested with him, into a formal Order, giving them their religious names, and allowing them to admit new members. Of these their Director, James of Poggibonsi, was the first. The Bishop also urged on the Seven to prepare for ordination, wherein all obeyed, Alexis Falconieri only excepted. Nothing could overcome the great humility in which he desired to remain Brother Alexis.

It were long to tell how, when the news of the vision went abroad, and the affluence of new numbers was known, other towns in North Italy desired to receive, and received, homes of the nascent Order, and of the new and special practices which distinguished them from others. Immediately—and to this day the practice remains—they began their Mass with Ave Maria, and ended it with Salve Regina, adding other devotions also to Our Lady of Dolours, who under that title had given herself as their special patron. Blessed Bonfilius established also the Third Order, and the Society of the Black Scapular, both of these as well as the Devotions, seeming to appeal to the hearts and satisfying the needs of the time, and all things seemed to promise prosperity. But the Founders had to share in the dolours of their mother, and the time of peace was not yet.

Gregory IX. died in August, 1241, without having formally confirmed the Order, and his successor Celestine IV., who had for the Servites great esteem and affection, who had also visited them at Monte Senario,

only lived a fortnight after his election. The See remained vacant for nearly two years, till Innocent IV. was elected in June, 1243. One of his earliest acts was to send Peter of Verona, a Dominican, afterwards known as St. Peter Martyr, as Inquisitor to Northern Italy, with a view to putting down the heresy of the Cathari, and incidentally to enquire into the life of the Religious of Monte Senario.

Peter of Verona conversed with Monaldi and Falconieri, and then prayed earnestly. He was answered by a vision in which Our Lady appeared to him, covered with a black mantle under which she sheltered Religious in the same habit, and in the company were those with whom he had spoken. Then he beheld angels gathering lilies, and among them were seven of surpassing whiteness, which Our Lady accepted, and placed in her bosom. The saint was convinced that the Order was of God, and after visiting Monte Senario reported favourably to the Pope.

This is no place to speak of the favours heaped on the Fathers by various Popes, nor the difficulties which cast shadows on their way, of their missionary efforts, nor the spread of the Order into other lands, even in the life time of the Founders. To do so would be to write the history of the Order, and far exceed our limit. We can but say a few words on their edifying lives, their holy deaths.

St. Bonfilius ruled the community till 1255, when after repeated endeavours, he succeeded in laying down his office, and the choice of the Fathers fell on St. Bonagiunta. Miracle had again marked him out as chosen of God. A merchant in the town, wearied by the Saint's exhortations to virtue, under pretence of aiding the needs of the convent, offered bread and wine, into which he had introduced poison, for the

special use of Fr. Bonagiunta. The Saint partook of the food without hurt, then, suspecting the evil, he made over it the sign of the cross; the wine flask burst into shards, the bread was in an instant full of worms; and the terrified servant who had, unwittingly, brought the gift, returned to find his master sick unto death.

St. Bonagiunta was the first to pass away. Worn with travel, always on foot, for the good of his Order, and the conversion of heretics, he felt his end approaching. On the last day of August 1257 he said Mass with extraordinary devotion, and, calling his brethren together, spoke in prophetic words, of trouble which was soon to fall on the Order; and then set himself to meditate aloud on the Passion. When he came to the words "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum—Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," he extended his arms in the form of a cross and fell forward against the altar. His brethren, among whom was St. Philip Benizi, at his wish, supported him in that position, and so kneeling at the tabernacle of his Lord, he breathed forth his soul.

St. Bonfilius was the next to hear his Master's call. He was Vicar General in the absence of the third General in Germany and in France. He too retired to Monte Senario, and died on January 1, 1262, "less of any definite disease than of those heavenly flames which burnt up his heart." He and those around him were consoled by special revelations from her whose faithful servant he had been.

Three years later came the turn of St. Amideus. For a year he had felt his force failing, and had remained at Monte Senario. He led a hermit life, constantly remaining whole hours alone in his grotto. Alone he died on the third Sunday after Easter, April 18, 1265. His death was made known to his brethren by a wondrous sign. A tongue of fire shot from Monte Senario

to heaven, while a sweet odour filled the whole convent: the Fathers did not doubt that, under this sign of flame, his heart, which had burnt with so vehement love, went to God. He was succeeded by Fr. Manetti as General, and he in his turn by the young Philip Benizi, into whose hands when he had committed his charge, St. Manetti also retired to Monte Senario, and died in St. Philip's arms.

The three brave men who were left spared no fatigue. One, St. Alexis continued his hard life as a lay brother, two in spite of advancing years wore themselves with missionary labours in foreign lands with their new General, St. Philip. In the spring of 1282, SS. Hugh and Sosthenes returned to Monte Senario. And as they went they spoke of all that their Lady had done for them, of the spread of the Order, of the deaths of those who had gone before. Raising their eyes to heaven, they desired that they also might be removed from this valley of tears and united to their Sovereign Good. Then they heard a voice which said: "Fear not, ye men of God, your consolation is at hand." At once on their arrival they were stricken with fever, and died at the same hour on May 3, 1282.

St. Philip Benizi was at that time in Florence, and, praying, he fell into a trance. He saw on Monte Senario, two angels pluck each a lily of perfect whiteness, and present them to Our Lady. He called his brethren around him, and knowing well what the vision meant, announced to them the deaths of the two holy Founders.

Not till 1310 was St. Alexis called away. In his last years it was only in virtue of holy obedience that he allowed himself to lie on a couch of straw, and to relax his rule of rigid abstinence. When he knew that his hour was come he called his brethren round him, and recited one hundred Aves, during which the angels circled around him in the form of doves. As he recited the

last Ave he saw our Lord approach, and crown him with sweet flowers. He cried: "Kneel my Brothers, see ye not Jesus Christ, your loving Lord and mine, who crowns me with a garland of beauteous flowers? Worship Him and adore. He will crown you also in the same manner, if, full of devotion to the holy Virgin, you imitate her immaculate purity, her profound humility."

So closed the life story of the Seven Founders, who, during the time they spent on earth, did all that in them lay to hide their merits under the veil of profound humility. Their sanctity was attested, not only by their heroic virtues, as they came to light, and by the miracles which accompanied them in their career, and illuminated their deaths, but also by an whole generation of saints, who arose on their traces, and became, as it were, their guard of honour.

Foremost of these was St. Philip Benizi, whom we have so often named, whose life merits a separate essay. He was the most brilliant disciple of the Seven Founders, and did honour to his masters by his work and sanctity. Indeed so great was the renown of his virtue, that he seemed even to cast into the shade the heroism of those who formed his character, as he is their abiding honour. No other ever reflected their spirit more faithfully, seized their thought more accurately, carried out their designs with such fidelity. Philip made a saint by saints, was in his turn the father of saints, of whom SS. Peregrine Laziosi and Juliana Falconieri, foundress of the Mantellate or Servite nuns, are the best known.

The spread of the Order in its early days was remarkable, and it was soon divided into six provinces, containing about one hundred convents, four provinces in Italy, one consisting of Germany, one of France. Only in these later days has the order spread to

England and to America, where to it, as to the Catholic Church in general, a vast field seems opening.

More than four hundred years passed away after the death of St. Alexis during which the Order had its vicissitudes, its triumphs of grace, its dangers, alternations of honour and scorn. But in the course of the year 1752, the Seven Holy Fathers were solemnly declared Blessed, in 1888 they were canonized. Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in death they were not divided; their invocation is collective, none in the Sacred Order is greater or less than another; the miracles necessary to their canonization were not wrought in connection with this or that one amongst them; all together continue the work they began in common.

Sancti Patres Fundatores, orate pro nobis.
Tu autem, præcipue, Domina Septem Dolorum,
Regina Servorum tuorum; Ora pro nobis.

Holy Father Founders, pray for us.
Thou too, especially, our Lady of Seven Dolours,
Queen of thy Servants, pray for us.

St. Frances of Rome.

(1384-1440.)

St. Frances was born in 1384, in the part of Rome known as the Pariona, close to the Piazza Navona, and she was baptized in the church dedicated to St. Agnes. Pope Urban VI. occupied the chair of St. Peter at that time, and the dreadful Western Schism which rent the Church for so many years was just beginning. It was destined to have great influence on the life of St. Francesca and to cause her great trials, but she did not live to see its end. Her father Paolo Busco and her mother Jacobilla dei Roffredeschi were both of noble birth and possessed large fortunes. Thus the child Francesca was surrounded from her earliest years with all the luxuries and amusement befitting her rank, but the natural seriousness of her mind was not slow to assert itself even amid such unfavourable surroundings.

Francesca was very precocious in all things. She read almost as soon as she could speak, and would repeat after her mother the office of our Lady when she was but a year old. Her parents, who were devoted to her, allowed her much liberty, and she divided her time between work and prayer.

As she grew older, Francesca became more and more

anxious to follow in the footsteps of her Lord. Unable on account of her extreme youth to work for the salvation of others, she determined to make the sacrifice of her wishes and of her tastes to God, and to mortify her body by some suffering imposed upon herself of her own free will, seeking in this way the more to resemble Him. She had barely reached her seventh year, when she resolved to devote her life to the service of God in a religious order. Before announcing her intention to her parents, she consulted her confessor, Dom Antonio di Monte Savello, a Benedictine of Monte Oliveto, to whose spiritual care she had been intrusted by her mother, and in whom she had great confidence. Dom Antonio advised her strongly to wait, and to make trial of her strength by following the rule of one of the most severe orders. Francesca joyfully acquiesced, and forthwith applied herself with great zeal to mortifications of all kinds; she already wore a hair shirt with Dom Antonio's permission, and she now rose in the night to pray, practising with great exactitude all the austerities enjoined by the rule.

Four years later, at the age of eleven, Francesca made known to her parents her determination to become a nun. Paolo Busco and his wife were much distressed at the intelligence, for although themselves good and religious people, they were not prepared to part with the child to whom they were so devotedly attached, and whose saintly life excited their loving admiration. Busco refused to give his consent on account of her great youth, and Francesca, understanding how reasonable was the objection, and hoping that her father would gradually become more reconciled to the idea of losing her, returned to her life of prayer and self-sacrifice.

A year had scarcely elapsed however, when her father gave her to understand that the young Lorenzo Ponziano had asked her hand in marriage, and that he had consented to the betrothal. Francesca was overcome with grief and fear at the thought of a life so different

from the one she had so long and so ardently desired. Throwing herself at her father's feet she clung sobbing to his knees, and implored him not to insist on her marriage, or at all events to defer it. But her father remained firm, reminding her gently of the obedience she owed him, and at length she consented to submit to his wishes. Retiring to her room she knelt before her crucifix in an agony of distress, and prayed with all the fervour of her soul that God would raise some obstacle to the union she dreaded and that he would grant her the grace to remain always His spouse. But God in His wisdom had other designs.

When Francesca's grief had somewhat abated, she went to the church of Santa Maria Nuova to see her confessor, to confide to him her troubles and to seek his advice. Dom Antonio comforted her and promised to pray for guidance, though at the same time feeling inwardly convinced that the child was destined to be a model of that perfection which is possible of attainment by a woman living in the world. He spoke encouragingly to her, pointing out that if her parents persisted in their desire for her marriage, it would be a sign not only that it was God's will, but also that it was her duty to obey. "Is not life a sacrifice at all times?" added the monk, "look well to the cause of your troubles: of what do you complain my daughter? Is it of the fulfilment of the divine will, or is it of the failure of your own hopes? Take courage, child! have but one thought, that of pleasing God, and if He refuses you the glory of being His spouse, be His faithful servant in whatever state He may place you."

Francesca returned home much struck with these words, for she understood now that the entire sacrifice of her will to God would be of much greater value than any sacrifices which she might have voluntarily undertaken. She prayed with increased fervour and multiplied her austerities, and six weeks later, when her father again spoke to her of her marriage, expressed herself quite ready to comply with his wishes, begging only that a

short time might be allowed her to prepare for the sacrament of matrimony, which was to be the beginning of such an important change in her life.

Lorenzo Ponziano di Ponziani (or Pontianis according to some authors) belonged to a family, one of whose members was said by tradition to have been the martyr, Pope St. Pontianus, and was in every way fitted to be the husband of Francesca. His elder brother Paluzzo was already married to Pannozza of the family of Santa Croce, who became later on Francesca's greatest friend and constant companion.

The marriage was celebrated amid great festivities, and all the principal people of Rome went to congratulate Lorenzo on having obtained a wife in every sense worthy of him, not only on account of her illustrious birth and great fortune, but also on account of her many virtues. The guests admired the gentle smiling face and the rich apparel of the young wife of Ponziano, who understood so well the art of saying kind and gracious things to everyone; but Francesca concealed a sad and heavy heart beneath this calm exterior, and under her splendid wedding clothes and ornaments, she still wore her hair shirt. The child—she was but thirteen years of age when she became the wife of Lorenzo Ponziano—had great difficulty in becoming reconciled to her new life, but the remembrance of the duty she owed her husband helped her to overcome her sorrow, and she soon began to do all that lay in her power to please him and to please his parents, Don Andrea and Donna Cecilia.

Vannozza, Francesca's young sister-in-law, proved her greatest comforter. One day, having discovered Francesca weeping bitterly in her room, Vannozza asked her gently the cause of her grief, and Francesca confided to her what had been the hope and desire of her life. Vannozza embraced her, tried to console her, and told her that she too preferred a life of retirement and of prayer, and that if Francesca would consent, she would like to join her in living according to her rule and that

they could try together to lead a perfect life, even though it were impossible for them to retire from the world. Francesca was overjoyed at this proposal, and from that time forth their austerities were practised in common. Lorenzo and Paluzzo, who had great admiration for their wives, left them entirely at liberty to regulate their lives as they desired. Clad in poor and simple garments, they visited all the little alleys and bye-ways of Rome, in search of suffering to alleviate and of sorrows to console. They were not content merely to send alms from the abundance of their wealth, but they also ministered personally to the wants of the poor, and cheered them with their loving sympathy.

Francesca's health, however, had been much affected by her anguish of mind, and she fell seriously ill, to the great affliction of her husband's family and of her own parents. Don Paolo was especially distressed, as he could not but feel that her illness was due to his insistence on her marriage. The most skilful doctors in Rome failed to understand her malady, and none of them being able to give her relief, little hope was entertained of her recovery. Some friends of the Ponziani family, being convinced that the illness was occasioned by some evil influence having been cast over Lorenzo's wife, tried to persuade them to have recourse to a witch whose incantations were believed to have great effect in charming away disease of all kinds. Francesca protested most indignantly against such wickedness, and shortly afterwards her illness left her and she rapidly regained her strength. The improvement was however only temporary; the same unaccountable disease again developed, and this time all her limbs were paralysed and she lost the power of speaking. For a year she lay in great suffering, unable to move without assistance, yet calm and happy, and quite resigned to the will of God. Again the Ponziani were advised to try magic, and this time they were persuaded to allow the witch to enter the room where Francesca lay. As soon as the Saint had recognized her visitor, she sat up erect in her bed

without any help, and called out in a clear strong voice: "Begone, thou servant of Satan, and never venture to enter these walls again!" Exhausted by the exertion, she fell back almost unconscious, and lay in a kind of stupor till the night was far advanced. Her attendants and Vannozza had fallen asleep worn out by fatigue, when suddenly a bright light shone forth in the room, and St. Alexis appeared to the Saint in a vision. He told her that he had been sent by God to ask her whether she were prepared to die, or whether she wished to be cured; and Francesca replied that she had no other wish than that the will of God might be entirely fulfilled. St. Alexis intimated to her that it was God's will that she should recover, in order that her life might conduce to His greater honour and glory; then casting his cloak over her, he disappeared. Immediately afterwards Francesca felt that her strength had been quite restored to her; rising from her bed she dressed herself and going to a neighbouring room she called gently to Vannozza and told her of her miraculous cure, begging her to get up at once and go with her to return thanks to God. They left the Palazzo Ponziani without disturbing any of its numerous inhabitants and made their way to the church of Saint Alexis on the Aventine. On their return, Francesca, who walked as firmly and as steadily as if she had never been ill, was received as one risen from the dead.

After this the two friends again resumed their life of prayer and good works. They arranged two little oratories, one at the very top of the house, and the other in the most unfrequented part of the garden, where they could pray and meditate undisturbed. Day after day they went to the hospital of Santo Spirito in Sassia to tend the sick, always selecting those who were suffering from the most repulsive diseases, as the special objects of their charity and tenderness. Francesca much grieved by the misery and distress with which she saw herself surrounded, and, appealed to on all sides for assistance, was most desirous of selling all

her rich clothes and jewels that she might increase the means at her disposal for the relief of the poor; but Dom Antonio, whom she consulted on the subject would not hear of it; he objected to all singularity in virtue, and thought it right that she should be attired in a way that was suitable to her rank.

Francesca suffered much all her life from violent temptations, and Almighty God allowed Satan to try the faith of His servant by visible manifestations and even by grievous bodily assaults. At times she was tormented with hideous visions of all things horrible, and then again the visions would assume most alluring and enticing appearances, but the saint remained steadfast through it all, and the temptations proved but stepping-stones to greater virtues, for by resisting them so valiantly she became worthy to obtain even greater favours and graces from God. One very hot day in July, as she and Vannozza were returning from St. Peter's at about noon, being overcome by the heat they went down to the Tiber to bathe their faces and refresh themselves with a little water; just as they were leaning over the edge Francesca felt a heavy blow from an invisible hand which knocked her over into the river, and Vannozza, whose hand she was holding, fell in also. The stream was very strong; before they could make any effort to reach the bank, the current had carried them far out into the middle of the river and it seemed quite inevitable that they would both be drowned, as no human aid was at hand; but they called upon God for help, and immediately found themselves safe and unhurt upon dry land.

The two friends also experienced some resistance to their way of life from their mother-in-law, Donna Cecilia, who, being afraid that their austerities would injure their health, and thinking moreover that their retired life might bring discredit on the family, appealed to Lorenzo and Palluzzo for their support and authority in her endeavour to induce her daughters-in-law to be present more frequently at the entertainments given by

people of their rank. But her sons were so well satisfied with the exemplary conduct of their young wives that they would not allow them to be disturbed, and Francesca and Vannozza continued their hidden life of charity and prayer.

In this way Francesca had reached her sixteenth year, and it was about that time that she began to receive sensible bodily corrections from her guardian angel. Whenever there was the least imperfection in her conduct, she immediately felt a mysterious blow which warned her of her fault. From a false sense of humility she resolved to conceal from Dom Antonio all the wonderful visions she had had, when suddenly just as she had begun her confession she was felled to the ground by a severe blow. The priest much astonished, as there was no visible cause for her fall, asked her to explain it, and when Francesca had given him a full description of all her supernatural experiences, Dom Antonio pointed out to her that the danger there was of her falling into the sin of pride, by overestimating herself on account of these graces, was much increased by concealing them from her confessor. Frencesca was very penitent, and promised never again to withhold any of her visions from him.

In the year 1400, at the beginning of the dreadful war between Louis of Anjou aud Ladislas Durazzo, who fought for the succession of the crown of Naples, Francesca's eldest son was born, to the great joy of Lorenzo and of all his family. He was baptized in the Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere and received the name of Giovanni Battista. For a time Francesca relaxed her austerities, by the advice of her confessor, that she might the more easily attend to her maternal duties. Contrary to the usual custom of noble Roman ladies, she nursed the child herself, and would entrust him to the care of no one else, trying to train him in virtuous habits from the very first. Before he could speak she would repeat the Our Father and Hail Mary to him every day, and she endeavoured to turn his earliest

thoughts to God. The little Battista was but a few weeks old when his grandfather Paolo Busco died and a year later Francesca lost her mother-in-law. After the death of Donna Cecilia, Don Andrea and his sons resolved to make over to Francesca the direction of the household, and the management of the servants. Lorenzo's wife was most unwilling to undertake such a charge; she pleaded her inexperience and Vannozza's undoubted right of precedence as the wife of the elder brother, but it was of no avail: they one and all, Vannozza included, entreated her to accept the post and she was obliged to give way in the end. The Saint's duties were thus increased to a very great extent, but she managed to fulfil them each and all with the greatest care and zeal, finding time besides for her many prayers and meditations and for innumerable works of charity. As mistress of the house she was ever most kind and considerate to all, requiring nevertheless that each member of the household should be exact in the fulfilment of his or her respective duties. Her care was unremitting both of their bodies and of their souls. If any of her servants fell ill, she would nurse them with the greatest solicitude and tenderness, passing whole nights by their bedsides and ministering both to their spiritual and to their bodily needs.

A year had scarcely elapsed since Francesca had undertaken the managements of her father-in-law's house, when Rome was visited by a fearful famine and pestilence, the result of the terrible civil war which was devastating Italy. People were dying in the streets of the city without food or shelter, a prey to one of the most horrible diseases our flesh is heir to. Francesca's heart was torn with pity at the sights and sounds by which she was surrounded. With unremitting ardour she toiled, and, aided by Vannozza, she strove to relieve all those who came to her for help. The Ponziani were rich, their palace was well stocked with provisions, and the Saint gave strict injunctions that none should be turned away empty handed. She dis-

tributed corn, bread, wine, oil and clothes with so lavish a hand to the sufferers, that the prudent Don Andrea got alarmed. Thinking to prevent further extravagance he sold all the corn in his granaries and all the wine in his cellars except a very small amount, just sufficient for the wants of the household. Francesca and Vannozza had come to the end of their own slender resources, and still the famine showed no signs of abating: crowds of famished wretches besieged the palace gates and the two friends had nothing left to give them. It was then that they took the heroic resolution of going themselves to beg from door to door, to obtain a few of the necessaries of life for the starving and the plague-stricken: day after day they went bravely on in spite of the sneers and the rebuffs which met them at every turn, yet even with their utmost endeavours they were only able to relieve a small portion of the suffering around them.

On one occasion, when Francesca had finished the distribution of her daily alms and there still remained several poor for whom she had no food, she suddenly remembered that a quantity of straw had been left lying in a corner of the granary and that possibly a few grains of corn might be found beneath it; calling to Vannozza and to her women, she told them of her happy inspiration and asked their help in her laborious undertaking. After some hours' diligent search among the straw they had been able to collect a whole measure of wheat and were bearing it away in triumph when Lorenzo came to seek his wife; he uttered an exclamation of surprise, which caused them all to turn round, for there upon the floor, where the straw had been, lay forty measures of yellow grain. Another time some poor priests and monks came to Francesca well-nigh exhausted, to ask for a little wine to sustain them in their labours among the sick and the dying, but the cellars of the Ponziani Palace had long been empty, and the last remains of the butt reserved for the use of the family had been consumed.

Nevertheless the Saint, whose faith in God was as boundless as her compassion for the sufferings of others, was not cast down, but taking up a jug hastened to the cellar and herself turned on the tap of the empty cask; immediately there flowed forth abundance of delicious wine. Don Andrea and his son, who had followed her curious to see what she would do, were so much struck with admiration at this wonderful miracle, that they gave her full authority over their entire property, promising never again to demur at the extent of her charities. Francesca much rejoiced, availed herself instantly of this permission to sell all her rich clothes and valuable jewels, and from that time forward she always wore a coarse serge dress.

In the year 1404 Francesca's second son was born. He was christened Giovanni Evangelista, and from his earliest childhood he possessed the most marvellous supernatural gifts. An old chronicler thus describes him: "Evangelista was old in mind, small in body, great in soul, resplendent in beauty, pure as an angel." At the age of three the child was endowed with the gift of prophecy, foretelling events which afterwards came to pass, and he already showed that same tender compassion for the poor and the suffering which had ever distinguished his holy mother. Evangelista was not quite three years old when his sister Agnese was born. Soon after the birth of her daughter Francesca had a vision which she understood to mean that the child was destined for a religious life. With this end in view, the little Agnese was encouraged in her love of a life of retirement and of prayer, and as she grew older she developed the same radiant beauty as Evangelista, and the same supernatural gifts.

When Francesca was about twenty-seven her temporal trials began. In 1408 the troops of Ladislas of Naples, the ally of the anti-pope, had obtained a footing in Rome, and he had appointed the Count of Troja, a rough soldier of fortune, governor of the city. The Ponziani family had ever been firm supporters of the

legitimately elected Pope, Alexander V., who in his turn had formed an alliance with Louis of Anjou, Ladislas' adversary; and the rival factions met constantly in hand to hand conflicts in the streets of Rome. In one of these affrays, Lorenzo, who was leading the papal troops, was severely wounded, and was carried back to the Ponziani Palace as one dead. Francesca's anguish was great, but overcoming herself immediately, she thought only of how she could best relieve and console the wounded man; her great experience in nursing and in dressing wounds proved of much service, and after a long and tedious illness Lorenzo recovered. Meanwhile the Count of Troja's position had become untenable, and he resolved to leave Rome; wishing however to wreak his vengeance on the leaders of the papal party, he arrested Paluzzo Ponziano, and learning that Lorenzo had a son of eight or nine years, he ordered him to be delivered up as an hostage, threatening the immediate execution of Paluzzo should his orders be disobeyed.

Francesca's grief and horror knew no bounds; for a short time her maternal terrors overcame her confidence in God. Flight alone she thought could save her son from the power of the tyrant whose wickedness was well known to all. Taking the little Battista by the hand she left the palace secretly and was making her way to one of the gates through the most unfrequented streets, when she was met by Dom Antonio. Her confessor questioned her as to the reason of her flight, and she told him of her son's danger. The priest, inspired by God bade her take the child to the Capitol, and go herself to the church of Ara Cœli; for an instant the Saint's faith wavered, but her habit of obedience and her great trust in God soon overcame her momentary weakness. Without a word she led Battista to the Capitol and herself delivered him over to the Count of Troja; then, overcome with anguish, she retired to the church hard by, and lay prostrate before our Lady's

altar, imploring her intercession. In the meantime the Governor had ordered the removal of the boy to a distant fortress, and the knight charged with this duty had lifted Battista to the saddle in front of him; but nothing would induce his horse to move. After several riders had tried in vain to conquer its obstinacy with whip and spur, other horses were brought forward, but with the same result; as soon as the young Ponziano had mounted, the horses stood as if rooted to the ground, and the Count of Troja, much frightened at this wonderful manifestation of divine interposition, gave orders that the boy should at once be restored to his mother.

At the accession of the new Pope, John XXIII., in 1410, fresh disturbances broke out. The Cardinals had assembled at Bologna for the election, and Ladislas, seizing the opportunity, had occupied Rome and had given it over to so terrible a sack and pillage, that the city was left in almost as great a state of desolation as it had been in ancient times after the incursions of the Goths and of the Huns. Lorenzo Ponziano, as one of the chief leaders of the papal party, went in danger of his life, and being urged to flight by his friends, he left Rome secretly and alone, no means having been found to enable his wife and children to accompany him. Left thus unprotected, calamity upon calamity befel Francesca. The Ponziani Palace was plundered amid scenes of the greatest confusion and disorder, and the Saint's little son, Giovanni Battista, was torn from his mother's arms and carried away a captive by Ladislas' brutal soldiers. All the possessions of the family out on the Campagna were ruthlessly destroyed, their flocks and herds seized, and their shepherds killed. More grieved at the thought of the little they were now able to do for others, than alarmed at their own state of destitution, Francesca and Vannozza lived in retirement in a corner of the palace, devoting their time to the care of Evangelista and Agnese and to their many good works. Of the little produce that was still brought in to them from their country estates, by far the larger

part went to feed the poor and the hungry, and they themselves were often without the barest necessaries of life.

Three years later, when Evangelista was nine years old, Rome was visited by a terrible famine and pestilence. Several cases of the dreadful malady occurred in the Ponziani Palace, and in his turn Evangelista was stricken with the disease. The Saint was again called upon to make a great sacrifice, for from the beginning there was little hope of the boy's recovery. Evangelista's death was as angelic as his life had been; after having asked for Dom Antonio to confess his sins, he called his mother to his bedside and bade her not grieve for him, telling her that he should pray for her in heaven, and that she would soon rejoin him there. Francesca allowed herself but little time to mourn her child's death, unceasing demands being made both upon her time and upon her resources. The two friends laboured with unremitting zeal among the sick and dying, dressing the dreadful sores of their patients, and attending not only to their physical wants, but trying by every means in their power to win the souls of the impenitent back to God. As the need increased Francesca and Vanozza turned the lower story of the palace into a temporary hospital, themselves carrying in such of the plague-stricken as were too weak to crawl so far.

It was at this time that God rewarded His faithful servant by giving her the power of healing in a miraculous degree. Many cases of cures wrought by the touch of her hands and by her prayers were attested at the time of her canonization. The fame of her miracles spread through Rome. Although Francesca rejoiced at a gift which enabled her to relieve so much suffering, her humility was much disturbed by it, and she endeavoured to conceal the power given her by attributing extraordinary healing properties to an ointment which she compounded of oil and of wax, and which was afterwards declared by the physicians to have no healing power whatever.

About a year after her son's death, as the Saint was one day praying in her oratory, a wonderful light suddenly shone in the room, and Evangelista appeared to his mother in the midst of the brightness, accompanied by an angel. Francesca was at first much dazzled and bewildered, but she soon recognised her son and endeavoured to embrace him; without effect however, his glorified body being impalpable. Evangelista told her how happy he was in heaven among the angels praising God unceasingly; he also told her that he had been sent to announce to her the approaching death of his little sister Agnese, and that God had appointed the archangel that accompanied him to be her guide and director for the future; then greeting her affectionately he disappeared. From that time forth the angel was always visible to Francesca, though unseen by others. Whenever she committed the least fault he would hide his face in grief, and she immediately became aware of the slightest imperfection in her motives by the saddened look on his face.

Agnese began to fade and droop soon after her mother's vision, and Francesca understood that yet another sacrifice was required of her. She attended upon the child with great tenderness, and even with reverence, as upon one who was so soon to appear before her Maker. A year later Agnese died and was laid by her brother's side in the vault of the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.

In 1414, Pope John XXIII. was prevailed upon after many delays to summon the Council of Constance, the outcome of which was the healing of the schism that had so long distracted Christendom, by the election of Pope Martin V. Rome was also freed from the terrors of constant invasions by the unexpected death of Ladislas, which occurred near Perugia on August 5, 1414, while he was on his way to attack Bologna. Peace being thus restored, the city breathed once more, plague and famine disappeared, and commerce and agriculture began to flourish. But before Francesca

could rejoice at this new state of things, she was herself laid low by the same terrible pestilence that had carried off both her children. The sorrows, the sufferings and the privations she had so long experienced had so undermined her strength that she grew rapidly worse and her condition was soon pronounced to be hopeless. Deserted by all but Vannozza, by those even whom she had rescued from the streets and had nursed so devotedly, blamed and reproached by her friends for having harboured the plague-stricken, Francesca lay at the point of death; but the Saint's faith and trust never wavered for a moment; she thanked God that the struggle was so soon to be over, and rejoiced at the thought of reunion with Evangelista and Agnese. She followed her rule of life as far as possible on her sick bed, and even tried to inflict severe penances upon herself, until they were forbidden by her director. But the work of Francesca's life was not yet accomplished and God did not see fit to call His servant. The disease suddenly left her, and she began gradually to recover her strength. It was during this illness that she one day had a dreadful vision; hell was revealed to her in all its terrors, and so vivid was the impression it made upon her, so appalling were the scenes she witnessed, that she could never afterwards speak of it without tears and trembling.

Lorenzo Ponziano and his son Battista were able at length to return, but only to find their home desolate, Lorenzo was overwhelmed with grief when he learnt the death of his children, but Francesca gently comforted him, telling him of Evangelista's happiness and of the presence of the angel, and from that time forward he lived in great retirement, devoting most of his time to religious exercises and to works of charity. Francesca by her prayers and her gentle remonstrances, was the means of reconciling him to his greatest enemy, a man who had deeply injured him, and against whom he nourished most vindictive feelings. Indeed so great was by this time the Saint's renown in the city on ac-

count of her virtues and of her miracles, that her influence was almost unbounded, and she was appealed to on all sides for the settlement of disputes and the adjustment of feuds.

Notwithstanding the great graces she received, Francesca never for a moment wavered in rendering the most exact obedience both to her husband and to her confessor, and this unquestioning obedience was at various times rewarded with visible signs of the divine approval. On one occasion when praying in her oratory, she was summoned by Lorenzo on the most trivial pretexts four times in succession. Each time she went back, and recommenced her prayers without the slightest sign of impatience or annoyance; but when she returned for the fourth time, she found the sentence she had been reading, written in letters of gold.

Their son Giovanni Battista had by this time attained his eighteenth year, and Lorenzo, wishing to see him married and settled before his own death which he felt to be not far distant, chose for him as wife a young girl called Mobilia, his equal in rank and of very prepossessing manners and appearance. But unfortunately Mobilia had a very violent and overbearing temper, and from the first conceived a great dislike to her mother-in-law, who on her side, tried by the greatest kindness and forbearance to win her regard. The poverty of Francesca's appearance, her humility and the inconveniences to which her boundless charities at times put the household, were alike so many causes of complaint to Mobilia; she never tired of abusing her in unmeasured terms to her husband and her father-in-law, and did not even scruple to rail at her in public. Lorenzo and Battista were much distressed and tried to soften her by telling her of Francesca's great virtues and of her miracles, but their intervention was of no avail, and Mobilia's heart seemed only to grow the harder. One day, the Ponziani family being all assembled in the great hall of the Palace, Mobilia began as usual to upbraid her mother-in-law, but all at once she became silent, her

limbs began to tremble, a deathlike pallor overspread her countenance and she fell back in a fainting condition. She was supported by Francesca and Vannozza, who laid her on a couch, but although she soon recovered consciousness, she became a prey to the most violent pains. Francesca remained by her bedside begging her to be patient and to offer her sufferings to God, when suddenly Mobilia's eyes seemed to be opened to the enormity of her conduct; weeping bitterly she implored the Saint's pardon, attributing all her faults to the dreadful pride of her nature, and begging the Saint to pray for her and to cure her. Francesca took her in her arms and blessed her, and the pains at once vanished. From that time forward Mobilia was an altered being, her admiration and affection for her mother-in-law knew no bounds, and she endeavoured in all things to imitate her.

Relieved of her many domestic duties, Francesca's thoughts once more turned to the dream of her youth, the consecration of her life to God in religion. Lorenzo, whose admiration for his saintly wife grew ever greater, offered to release her from all the obligations of matrimony, and to leave her perfect freedom as to the regulation of her life and conduct, on condition that she should never leave him and always help him with her counsels and example. Francesca assented joyfully, seeing in this greater freedom the partial realization of her wishes. It was about this time that she formed the project of instituting a sort of religious society or confraternity among her devoted friends and companions. Dom Antonio approved of the plan, and obtained the consent of his Superior to the affiliation of the new society to the Order of the Benedictines of Monte Oliveto, of which he himself was a member. The associates were to live in the world and to be bound by no vows, making instead a simple offering of themselves to God. No special duties were imposed on them, Dom Antonio their director only enjoining a more strict mode of life and the diligent practice of all

Christian virtues. They acquired the name of Oblates in consequence of the term used in their solemn act of consecration, which was spoken of as an oblation *(oblatio)* and not according to ordinary usage as a profession *(professio)*. They were known at first as Oblates of Mary, later on as Oblates of Tor de Specchi, from the name of their house; and from the very beginning they looked up to Francesca as their spiritual mother and head.

On the feast of our Lady's Assumption 1425, Francesca, Vannozza, and eight of their companions after confession and communion, pronounced the solemn act of consecration in the little church of Santa Maria Nuova in the Forum. Such was the commencement of the Saint's future order.

Francesca, although now an Oblate, continued to devote the greater part of her time to her husband, whose health was failing, and to her children, and remained as ever a model wife and mother. The Saint's love of holy poverty had increased with her other virtues; she always wore the coarsest sackcloth garments and lived entirely on vegetables and bread, yet in her zeal for mortifications of all kinds she never tried to inflict them on others, but sought rather to conceal her own austerities under a smiling and joyful exterior, and the house and table of the Ponziani were always conducted on a scale befitting their rank.

In 1426 Francesca left the city of her birth for the first and only time in her life. She had long desired to make a pilgrimage to Assisi, the birthplace of the great apostle of poverty, St. Francis, and having with some difficulty obtained the consent of Lorenzo and Paluzzo, she set out one hot July day, accompanied by Vannozza and Rita Celli, another of the Oblates. They had resolved to go the whole way on foot, without taking money or provisions with them, in conformity with the Franciscan spirit of poverty, and they hoped to arrive at Assisi by the 2nd of August in time for the great indulgence of the Portiuncula. The heat was

very great, especially when they reached the Umbrian plain; and at length, weary and footsore, parched with thirst and well-nigh fainting, they came within sight of the dome of Santa Maria degli Angeli and of the little white town on the hill. While in this plight and as they were pausing to take breath, an old man of venerable appearance, clad in the Franciscan habit, accosted them and spoke to them with such fervour of our Lord's Passion and of the Sorrows of Mary, that Francesca thought to recognize in him the holy patriarch Francis. The friar seeing their distressed condition, bade them enter an orchard close at hand by the roadside, and throwing up his stick into a pear tree, brought down some fruit of such exceptional size and refreshing coolness, that their thirst was soon assuaged; but when they turned to express their gratitude the old man had disappeared. Francesca then told her companions that she was convinced it was St. Francis himself who had come to their assistance and that she had seen her angel's countenance shining with unwonted radiance the whole time the patriarch had been with them. Soon after this they reached the sanctuary—the chapel, little more than a hut, repaired by St. Francis' own hands, which now stands in the midst of a great basilica and is visited yearly by thousands of pilgrims. Next morning, after the three companions had received Holy Communion in the little chapel and had remained some time in prayer, Francesca had a vision encouraging her to proceed with the foundation of her new community; then going up the hill they visited the birthplace of the saint, the sites connected with his history and that of St. Clare, and finally his tomb in the great triple church of St. Francis.

On their return to Rome, Francesca found to her great grief that her friend and director Dom Antonio Savello had died in her absence. He had given her the most valuable counsels and assistance in the organization of her new congregation, and she felt his loss all the more deeply at a time when she con-

templated the development of that congregation into a permanent religious order, a step which was certain to be beset with difficulties of all kinds. Sensible of the great importance of her choice of a director at such a time, Francesca had recourse as usual to prayer, and after much deliberation decided to confide her difficulties to Dom Giovanni Mattiotti, canon and priest of the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, a man of irreproachable life, but of rather an irresolute character.

Francesca often suffered much from his vacillation and indecision, especially with regard to the guidance of the Oblates, yet it served but to increase her patience and humility, and she always obeyed the most contradictory of his commands with the same cheerful abandonment of her will to God as she had shown all through her life. By his orders she gave him a full and detailed account of all the supernatural revelations made to her, and of these he kept a faithful record in writing.

In July 1430 the Saint was warned by a vision of the war and strife which were so soon again to disturb Rome and Christendom; she recounted the details of this vision to several persons, and the wonderful accuracy of her foreknowledge was afterwards vouched for by them, as her prophecies were confirmed by the course of events. Pope Martin V., who had done so much towards the healing of the schism and the peaceful settlement of other disputes, died early in the year 1431, and was succeeded on the Papal throne by Eugenius IV. A report that he had left considerable hidden treasure was made use of by the Colonnas, one of the most powerful of the great Roman families, as a pretext for the renewal of hostilities. Pope Eugenius was besieged in the church of the Holy Apostles where he had taken refuge, and it was with great difficulty that he managed to escape from them, disguised as a monk. He fled to Bologna, and some time afterwards sent a legate to Rome who was able to establish some sort of a peace among the various rival factions. Eugenius himself remained in the north

of Italy, engaged with the preparations for summoning a council.

While Rome was thus once more distracted by civil war and its attendant calamities, another great trial was in store for Francesca: she was to lose the friend of her youth, one who had always taken part in all her sufferings and in all good works. Her faithful companion and sister Vannozza lay at the point of death. The Saint, ever forgetful of herself and of her own sorrow, nursed and consoled her friend with all the tenderness of which such a nature is capable, and when, as the end approached, Vannozza was assailed and tormented by grievous temptations, Francesca remained praying by her side, exhorting her to patience and to fortitude till her spirit had passed away in peace. Vannozza was buried in the church of Santa Croce in a vault belonging to her own family, and was followed to the grave by hundreds of the poor people she had relieved and comforted, all striving to get a last glimpse of the face of one whom they had so loved, or to carry away a morsel of her garments as a remembrance of all she had been to them. When the funeral was over Francesca remained praying in the church and was rapt in an ecstacy in sight of all the people; but her confessor Dom Giovanni Mattiotti bidding her arise and go to the sick in the hospitals, she immediately complied, her obedience being so perfect that even the delights of heavenly contemplation had no power to make her deviate from the most scrupulous performance of her duties.

After Vannozza's death the Saint's visions and ecstacies became much more frequent, and as they all pointed more or less to the fulfilment of her plans with regard to the foundation of a regular community, she began to be very anxious for their accomplishment. Dom Giovanni Mattiotti, Fra Bartolommeo Bondi, and Dom Ippolito, the sub-prior of the Benedictines of Monte Oliveto, were revealed to her as her coadjutors in the work.

A small house called Tor de Specchi was taken for the

new Congregation, close to the Capitol and not far from the church of Santa Maria Nuova, which the Oblates continued for some time to frequent, not having at first a chapel of their own. A code of rules was drawn up, based on the rule of St. Benedict, to whose order the Oblates were affiliated, and Francesca being herself unable to reside at Tor de Specchi on account of her promise to her husband Lorenzo, appointed Agnese de Lellis superioress, to undertake the direct management of the community in her absence. Trials and difficulties however soon arose. Some of the Olivetan monks disapproved of the affiliation of the Oblates to their order, saying that Dom Ippolito had exceeded his powers in allowing a married woman to participate in their privileges, but the matter having been referred to the head of the Benedictine order, he pronounced in favour of the affiliation after a careful examination of Francesca as to the means and scope of her work. The Saint was now most anxious to obtain the Holy Father's sanction and blessing on her undertaking, and urged Dom Giovanni, who was personally known to Eugenius, to draw up a charter of the rules and conditions of the Congregation and to present it to the Pope for approval ; but the priest, timid and vacillating as usual, put forward all sorts of objections to the taking of such a step. The community, he contended, was too poor to become an independent order, the new Oblates not secure enough in their vocations and good resolutions. Fra Bartolommeo, a man of the same temperament as Dom Giovanni, was equally given to hesitation, and it was not until Francesca had communicated to them the encouraging tenour of several of her visions, that they finally consented to lay the case before the Pope. Eugenius received their petition for his approbation with favour, and after some little delay promulgated a bull confirming the foundation of the Oblates.

On the feast of the Annunciation 1433, the Oblates assembled in the church of Santa Maria Trastevere, and after having heard Mass together, they went in

procession to their new house of Tor de Specchi, and were there established by Francesca, whose only sorrow was that she could not join them in community. Any time that she could be spared from the Ponziani Palace, she spent at Tor de Specchi, taking part in the daily life of the Oblates, their prayers and their labours; exhorting and encouraging them, and always choosing for herself the most disagreeable and menial duties. Her humility was so great that she never would allow herself to be applied to as the head of the new order, but invariably referred everything to Agnese de Lellis as superioress.

Lorenzo Ponziano died in 1436, three years after the establishment of the Oblates. He had been ailing for some time. Although by no means an old man, his life had been a hard one, and the wounds he had received in the defence of his native city and of the papal cause, had never been properly healed. Francesca nursed him night and day with untiring devotion, notwithstanding that she was herself much worn and exhausted by the laborious and mortified life she had led since childhood. He was laid at rest beside Evangelista and Agnese in the Ponziani vault in the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, and though her grief for his loss was great, Francesca felt that in all her trials God was about to answer the prayer of her childhood. For forty years she had been a model wife and mother, and in the few years that yet remained to her, God destined her to be the model of a true religious. She stayed yet another year in the world arranging her affairs and providing for the well-being of her children and grandchildren, but when she at length announced her intention of retiring to Tor de Specchi, both Battista and Mobilia were overwhelmed with grief and begged and implored of her to remain with them. They had imagined that as she had not joined the Oblates directly after Lorenzo's death, she had given up all idea of doing so. But Francesca was not be moved, her duties in the world

being now at an end, she had resolved to consecrate to God what was left to her of her life, and she tried to console her son and his wife by pointing out to them that they would be able to see her from time to time.

It was in 1437, on the feast of St. Benedict, that Francesca left the Ponziani Palace to take up her abode at Tor de Specchi. On arriving there she put off her shoes and knelt at the door in the humble guise of a penitent craving admission. The Oblates much affected at the sight of the humility of their foundress, hastened to raise her, and conducting her to the chapel, they bade her welcome to her new home. The Superioress, Agnese de Lellis, hastily summoned a meeting of the community, while the Saint was still praying in the chapel, and explaining to them how absurd it would be for her to continue as head of the house, now that their Mother had come to live among them, told them that she wished to resign the office. The Oblates acquiesced as to the desirability of the change, and Francesca was immediately elected Superioress with their unanimous consent. The Saint, however, on hearing what had passed, declared herself quite unequal to the management of the community; she had come, she said, to serve, and not to be served, and it was only after the Oblates had appealed to Dom Giovanni Mattiotti and that he had imposed it on her as a matter of obedience, that she consented to become Superioress. Agnese de Lellis was appointed her assistant.

Francesca's life at Tor de Specchi was even more perfect, if possible, than her life in the world. She followed the rule with the most scrupulous exactitude; her prayers became longer and her visions more frequent. At times she would remain rapt in ecstacy for hours together; no external event seemed to have any power over her on these occasions, holy obedience alone held its sway, and at any command from her confessor, Dom Giovanni, she would at once rise and obey.

In the summer of the year 1439, Francesca had several visions announcing to her her approaching end. She had only attained her fifty-sixth year, but the many trials and privations she had undergone, and the severe mortifications and austerities to which she had subjected herself, had in the end, told upon her health. She suffered much from weakness and actual physical pain, but never for a moment did she allow her sufferings to interfere with any of her duties. Another and a keener trial, a moral one, to which she had ever been most sensitive, may be supposed to have aggravated her state. Christ's Church was again torn with internal strife. The Council of Basle had taken upon itself to elect an anti-pope, Felix V., in the place of Eugenius IV., and this schism, of which Francesca deplored the beginning but did not live to see the end, lasted ten years.

On the 3rd of March 1440, early in the morning, the Saint was summoned to the bedside of her son Battista who was lying dangerously ill. She started off immediately accompanied by Sister Augustine, one of the Oblates who was most devotedly attached to her, but by the time she reached the Ponziani Palace, Battista had almost recovered and was able to get out of bed; she agreed nevertheless to spend the day with her children at their urgent entreaty. Towards evening, when it was time to return to Tor de Specchi, Francesca had suddenly become so weak as to be hardly capable of traversing the short distance between the Palace and the convent. Battista and Mobilia begged her to remain with them that night, but, faithful to the rule which enjoined the return before nightfall of such Oblates as might have been away visiting sick relatives, Francesca insisted on setting out. Supported by Sister Augustine she managed to reach the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, and once there she resolved to enter to ask Dom Giovanni's blessing. When the priest saw how dreadfully exhausted she was, he bade her return to her son's house; this the Saint was most unwilling

to do, as she felt that she would never again see Tor de Specchi. Dom Giovanni however, persisted and as a matter of obedience Francesca returned. In the night a malignant fever set in and towards morning the Saint felt convinced that her end was near. She sent immediately for the Oblates and her confessor. When they arrived she told them that she had but few more days to live and Dom Giovanni administered all the last Sacraments. The Oblates were inconsolable at the thought of losing their beloved foundress, and implored her to ask of God that she might be spared to them yet a little while. "God's will is my will," the Saint exclaimed, "His good pleasure mine. If He chooses me to tarry yet on earth, so be it then. I am ready to remain in this miserable world if He commands it." But the labours of God's faithful servant were drawing to a close, she was soon to receive her eternal crown. She lingered for seven days in the most perfect peace; not the smallest shadow of doubt or temptation seemed to cross her mind, and with the little strength that remained to her, she gently consoled her spiritual children, exhorting them to follow ever faithfully the rule they had willingly embraced, and like the Blessed Disciple enjoining them repeatedly to love one another. On the 9th of March, towards evening, her face shone with an unearthly light, and her confessor asked her what vision it was she then beheld. "The archangel has finished his task," she said, "he beckons me to follow him," and with these words Francesca's pure spirit passed away to God.

When it became known to the Roman people that 'the poor woman of the Trastevere,' as she loved to be called, was no more, the public grief knew no bounds. The Ponziani Palace was besieged night and day by mourning crowds, eager to look once more upon their benefactress. So great indeed was the crowd that Battista became alarmed, and had his mother's body removed to the church of Santa Maria Nuova. Numbers of sick people were brought to Francesca's bedside, and in

the church the throng was even greater. The blind, the halt, and the lame crowded round the bier, and the many miracles wrought there served but to confirm the people in their belief that God sanctioned the title of saint which they had already bestowed upon her.

Francesca was buried in the chapel set apart for the Oblates in Santa Maria Nuova, and a few months later, Battista, together with some of the Roman nobles, erected a tomb in her honour. It was not however until 1608, that Pope Paul V. issued the decree declaring her canonization. More than a century and a half had elapsed since her death, and a long process of investigation had been gone through, although her fellow-citizens had venerated her as a saint and had sought her intercession from the time of her death. She was always known as Santa Francesca Romana, literally St. Frances the Roman, without any reference to her husband's name, proving thus how dear she was to the Roman people and how much they regarded her as their own.

On the 9th of March, Francesca's feast, crowds of people still visit the Ponziani Palace, the scene of her heroic labours among the plague stricken, and Tor de Specchi, where her spiritual children yet strive to follow in her footsteps: and in the church of Santa Maria Nuova pilgrims pray beside the tomb of her who 'despising all things followed Him.'

A Siberian Priest.

By Lady Herbert.

PREFACE.

The moderate tone in which the following history of Father Gromadski is written, and the apparent freedom of action which that good priest enjoys, must by no means be taken as a proof of any friendly policy on the part of the Russian Government towards the Catholic Church. If he be allowed to minister to the wants of the poor Poles in Siberia, almost all of whom are sufferers for conscience sake, it is not through Governmental protection, but through the kind-hearted permission of certain Governors who had been also, for conscience sake, sent out of Poland to be "employés" in the far East. The outrage done to the Catholic Church in the Seminary of Keiler, not far from the Austrian frontier and the horrible brutality perpetrated at Kroze in Lithuania, at the end of November, 1893, are only fresh proofs that Russia is by no means as "pacific" as Mr. Brand in his article in the *Contemporary Review* imagines, but that she is steadily aggressive in her policy, the main feature of which is the entire suppression of Catholicism in Poland. The pressing needs of Father Gromadski have been advocated both in the Polish and the French Press; and some one in France, reading the article, sent him a thousand francs (£40) for his orphanage. I can only hope that a similar effect may be produced in England. Already one military

man has sent me £10; I will most gladly receive and forward anything that may be sent to me for this purpose.

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So much has been written about Siberia of late years, and so many English travellers have visited that country, that it would seem almost superfluous to dwell upon the geographical features of that vast portion of the Russian Empire. But one thing has not been realized by English people, and that is, its enormous size. Its provinces are each larger than the largest kingdom in Europe. The governmental province of Jackuck is fifteen times bigger than the whole of Great Britain. The province of Tobolsk is twice as large as France; that of Tomsk twice as large as the whole of Germany; and so on. Scattered throughout these huge provinces are between thirty and forty thousand Catholics, almost all Poles; but there are only eleven priests to administer to their spiritual wants, under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Bishop of Mohylewski, who resides at St. Petersburg, which is between thirteen and fourteen hundred miles off. The parishes are enormous in extent; that of Tomsk, for instance, covers an area of 38,186 square miles; that of Krackno-Jarsk 46,708 square miles, and one can judge by these figures under what difficulties the missionaries labour in Siberia. For a great number of years the Jesuits undertook these missions; but on their dispersion in 1820, the care of of souls was entrusted to other priests, some secular and some regular, whose heroic labours are recorded in the history of what Boghdan Zalewski calls "the Polish Thebaid." If the Poles have been the pioneers of civilization in Siberia, their holy and devoted missionaries have carried the torch of Faith to the very shores of the Pacific Ocean and merited the title of

apostles in that vast continent. Among these zealous labourers in God's vineyard, Father Valerian Gromadski is one of the most admirable, from his courage, zeal, and self-sacrifice; and a short account of his life and adventures will, we think, be of interest to our readers.

He was born in Gitomir, where his mother still lives, and from his earliest years determined to be a priest. Having passed through the necessary training and been ordained, he was appointed curate at Harochow in Wohlynia. There, for some reason or other, he fell under the suspicion of the Russian Government and, in 1861, was sent to Siberia. On his way to his far-off destination, he was allowed to break his journey at Omsk, where he was enthusiastically received by several hundred Catholics, who were too thankful for the opportunity thus given them of approaching the sacraments and hearing Holy Mass, of which they had been so long deprived. One day, however, he received a summons from the Governor of the town, a Frenchman named Duchamel, who told him that he had received orders to send him on to his destination; that if he remained at Omsk he would have nothing to live upon; while in the town to which he had been nominated, he would have a fixed salary. He added, that personally he had no objection to his remaining where he was, if he chose to do so. Father Gromadski replied that he felt sure any one of the four or five hundred Catholics in Omsk would very willingly share his last morsel of bread with him; and that if the Government would allow it, he was ready to remain and work amongst them, not caring for material comforts, which were of no consideration whatever. The Governor, touched at his answer, at once rose and shook hands with him; and has, ever since, proved one of the staunchest supporters of the mission. Father Gromadski stayed on accordingly till 1869, when he was sent by his Bishop to Tomsk, leaving a lasting remembrance in the hearts of poor Catholics of Omsk, and also a small stone church which he had mainly built himself. At Tomsk he found a Polish Catholic Governor, M. Despoth-Knowicz, who was al-

ways ready and willing to help him and his Catholic congregation; and a few years later he was appointed by his metropolitan, Bishop Gintowt, to be parish priest. Though his nomination has never been formally recognized by the Russian authorities, yet his title to and jurisdiction over that immense parish has never been disputed.

Before giving our readers some extracts from his most interesting letters, we will say a few words as to the original foundation of this important mission. When after the imprisonment of Bishop Sotyk and his companions, the unhappy band of Polish exiles so greatly increased in numbers, the Russian Government at last granted the petition of the prisoners and instructed the Governor to allow the Catholics to open a mission and have their own priest. The first was a Jesuit Father, then the Bernardines (Franciscans), were appointed to succeed the Jesuits, and Father Remigius erected the first chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. When, in 1833, the Polish exiles arrived in such large numbers, a church to replace the temporary chapel became an absolute necessity. But how could funds be found? The exiles arrived on foot and in the greatest destitution. Father Remigius was not to be discouraged. He sold the few cattle he then possessed, bought a horse and cart with the proceeds, and then went about the whole country, to every town and every village, knocking at every door, and asking alms in the name of Jesus Christ. He accepted gratefully everything that was offered him, whether it were money, or bread, or meat, or linen, or flour, &c. Everywhere he met with a kind and hospitable reception. When his cart was well filled, he returned to Tomsk, gathered his flock together, and set them to work to build the church. He himself mixed the mortar, made the bricks, slacked the lime, and superintended the whole work. The food he had brought he divided among the workmen, and when his stock was exhausted he set out again to beg. In this way, at last, the church was completed, while its internal adornment was due to the

generous contributions of distant benefactors. Over the high altar hangs a copy of Raphael's "Transfiguration," a subject peculiarly suited to poor exiles, leading them to offer up their sufferings and home sickness to Him Who could transform their sorrows into meritorious acts for His greater glory. Many others pictures were subsequently added, and a stone tower was built, in which hang a good peal of bells. The church itself was built on a mountain commanding a view of the town and the whole country. On one side flows the river Tomsk amidst magnificent scenery, on the other rise immense forests many miles in extent.

This was the state of things when Father Remigius was recalled to his monastery; but Father Gromadski carried on his work in the same manner. A Catholic cemetery was added in which he planted trees and shrubs, and which is so beautifully kept that even strangers stop to admire it. His great anxiety now is to build an orphanage for the poor children whose parents have perished in the prisons, which are hot-beds of typhus fever. Strangely enough, children are less liable to this disease than older people; but the result is that Father Gromadski has an endless number of these poor little ones on his hands. One of his greatest benefactors was the late Comtesse Potocka, whose charity was inexhaustible and who never forgot the poor Siberian exiles. But he is yet very far from having obtained enough money for his purpose. We will now give our readers some extracts from his letters to his mother, which will give the best picture of his labours and trials. In November, 1871, he writes from the banks of the Kama:

"Thank God! I am in good health and able to work in His vineyard for these poor people. Their emotion is so touching and sincere at the sight of a priest and at the thought of being able to go to confession and once more hear Holy Mass, blessings of which they have been deprived for years. How fervently one prays when tears are in the soul, and accompany the Holy Sacrifice instead of organ and song! But sometimes

the people sing and their voices are so touching, so pathetic and heartfelt, and so full of expression that often I cannot help crying. How my heart aches for them! For long years they had not been able to receive the Bread of Angels, or enjoy the smallest spiritual consolation. I baptized a great many children, some four or five years old; and married a number of couples. It is difficult to make you realize what my life is with its constant alternations of joy and sadness."

Again, in 1872, he writes from Tomsk to his mother:

"I have just returned from a long journey and contrived to reach home before the thaw set in, which is very late this year. On the 25th of March there were thirty degrees of frost, and on the 4th of April twenty-five. The snowfall was an unusually heavy one, and the horses were often up to their ears in snow. Gliding through forests and steppes in my little sledge, surrounded on all sides by mountains of snow, I said my prayers and thought of you, while the little bells at the horses' heads formed the only sound. God preserved me and brought me back safely to my home. May He be thanked and praised, *in sæcula sæculorum*. This last journey of mine took six months, and I travelled about nine thousand versts. I baptized about one hundred children, married twenty couples, and heard the confessions of several thousand people, some of whom had not been able to draw near the Sacrament of Penance for years, and died immediately after receiving absolution, as if they had only waited for that grace. Others who had been ill, recovered their health in a marvellous way after having the holy sacraments administered to them. In the beginning I did not feel any physical fatigue; but towards the end I had to make efforts to finish what I had begun, so great was my exhaustion. One day I was on my way to a lonely hamlet in which lived two Catholic families and a few unmarried men. I took the most direct route and came towards nightfall to the village of Wiesola. One of the peasants was going along the road with a waggon of straw. On perceiving such a phenomenon as a sledge

gliding out of the forest, which he had never seen since his exile, he came up to my coachman and asked who I was? He replied, 'A Catholic priest.' Struck dumb with surprise, and still incredulous, he came up to my sledge and greeted me in Samogian with the customary salutation, 'Blessed be Jesus Christ!' I answered him, in the same language, 'For ever and ever.' (You must know that I have been compelled to learn the Samogian dialect, as these good people do not know a word of Polish.) Well, no sooner had he heard my answer than he dropped his cap and gloves, was silent for a moment, and then gave vent to his pent-up feelings. He did not cry, he literally roared like a bull, and I could not restrain my tears. He then unharnessed his horse and galloped back to the village to announce the good news. When I arrived, I saw a little crowd hurrying out to meet me. Mothers held out their babies for me to bless; they smothered my hands with kisses, and some even kissed my coat. These poor people entertained me most hospitably, each offering me whatever he had, and thinking nothing was good enough for me. I was obliged to remain among them for several days, during which time I baptized the children, blessed the cemetery and each of their houses, and performed the funeral service over the remains of a poor fellow who had died a short time ago, and whom they had been compelled to bury without the rites of the Church. After hearing all their confessions, giving them Holy Communion, and consoling them as well as I could, I was compelled to leave them, and the same scene was enacted at my departure as on my arrival."

In spite of the consolation such visits afforded him, we must not imagine that Father Gromadski was free from one of the most terrible trials common to Siberian exiles—that yearning after their own country, their own home, and their own families, that longing for the Fatherland which they never again will be permitted to see. In one of his letters, Father Gromadski owns to his mother how home-sick he had felt, how discouraged and cast down; and that, at such times, nothing seemed

to console him. "I often experience such moments," he writes, "which are indeed heavy trials; but in all may God's holy will be done; His will is the best and surest for us." And again, last winter, he says, "To-day I was cast down and very sad, but looking at the crucifix brought me from Rome, I offered to Jesus Christ my longings for home, and my terrible loneliness. In the evening Mr. H—— gave me your letter which was so full of consolation, and I felt that God had sent both the sorrow and the joy. May His Name be for ever blessed!" The "consolation" which he speaks of was the assurance that in a far-off land people were praying for him and for his poor parish of Tomsk. "Ask for a little prayer for me and for my poor flock," is the burden of every letter. "We need it so much ask the good Carmelites to redouble their zeal in praying for our intentions, their prayers obtain strength for us." Will no one who reads these lines join in such petitions? Writing to one of the benefactresses of the Tomsk Mission who had sent him a violet cope, Father Gromadski adds several little details which throw a vivid light on the cares and trials of a Siberian priest's daily life.

"In a short time I must go to the foot of the Altai Mountains, to carry the consolations of religion to my poor brethren among the hills. The snow is very deep this year, so that at present the road is impracticable, and I must wait till the thaw sets in. This year has been a sad one; the winter has been unusually cold and long. On the second of February, I was called to the sick-bed of a dying man. We drove for hours and hours, and were continually losing our way in the forest. How we arrived at our destination was a miracle; but, thank God, I came in time to administer the Sacraments to the poor fellow. It was a most fearful night, and to show you what was the intensity of the cold, the next morning eighty men and women were found frozen to death. It is even worse in some ways when the thaw sets in. The huts are then under water for a time, and many people are drowned. It is very dangerous to cross the Siberian

rivers when they are swollen. One poor mother, while trying to save her child who had fallen out of the boat in which the family had taken refuge in the flood, let fall the baby she had in her arms, and so lost them both. Another day I saw a horse and rider swept away by the foaming torrent, and it was impossible to render them any assistance. I could tell you a great deal more of our difficulties," he adds, "but the description would be monotonous, for we always have to face the same dangers and feel the same pleasure when we are able to do anything for God's service. But we must never forget that we are unprofitable servants, and try to have a pure intention in all our works, not looking for this world's praise or blame. Only one who thus labours can be counted happy."

We must bear in mind that the Russian Government does not allow anything for the expenses attendant on these distant journeys, unless there should be any Government troops quartered in the mission; but in Father Gromadski's case there were no soldiers to be looked after. The only assistance given by the authorities is a paper, by showing which the missioners are only charged three kopecks a verst for a pair of horses, and a kind of passport which insures their travelling about without interference, and enables them to put up at Government offices, if there be no other shelter, and to have the help of the mayor or magistrate in case of necessity. The expenses of these pastoral visits must, therefore, be met either by the poor people who send for them, or by the priests themselves, and in Father Gromadski's case they almost always came from his own pocket.

The following is a description of a night journey from the town of Kamisk to a distant village: "One day I had a sick-call to an exile of a very urgent nature. As the road was so bad and the distance so great, I took three horses harnessed tandem-fashion. On the first sat a Kalmuk, a second one sat on the box, and squeezed in behind me in the sledge was a small boy whom I had taught to serve Mass. The cold was frightful, the

piercing Siberian wind howled wildly, and a fall of snow covered the steppes as far as the eye could reach. After long battling with the ice-laden wind, and being continually obliged to get out of the sledge to drag it out of the drifts, we came to a dead stop. I asked the coachman, 'Where can we pass the night?' 'I fear we must stop where we are,' was the reply. 'But we shall be frozen to death!' I exclaimed. 'It may be' he answered. 'But perhaps God may permit us to see the dawn.' There was nothing to be done but to wait. Hour after hour passed. I spoke to my men from time to time, but perceived at last that they were frozen, and did not reply. I felt I was more warmly dressed than they were, so I forced them to get into the sledge, and I stood by the horses. After another hour or so I asked them if they were still alive. A faint 'Yes' was the reply, but now I began myself to feel the result of the exposure to such awful cold, and to realize that I could not last long if I remained where I was. I determined to go on foot, saying to the men that 'perhaps God would give me strength to reach some human habitation,' and asked the coachman if he could, to tell me the direction of the village for which we were bound. He did so, but added that it was twenty versts from where we were. I, however, resolved to try. It was the only way of saving us all. But my limbs were numbed, a feeling of exhaustion and drowsiness came over me. I made a vigorous effort to throw it off, but after a few more steps a kind of hallucination came over me. I seemed to see wonderful palaces and lights, and then I fell down in the snow, and completely lost consciousness. When I recovered, I found myself to my great astonishment in a warm bed, surrounded by kind faces whose eyes streamed with tears. Our Lord had had pity on His poor servant. When I was well enough to listen, I was told how I had been saved. At dawn a peasant from the very village to which I was bound was obliged to go some distance on business of his own. All at once he saw something black lying on the snow, and said to himself: 'In the evening when

I come back, I will go and see what it is.' Then an undefined but strong feeling urged him to go and look at once. He went and found that the black mass was a man almost frozen to death. It was not a rare sight in those parts. On kneeling down, he found that there was still a little warmth in the body, and so lifting it up into his cart, he resolved to take it back to the village. On reaching it, he met a man standing at his door, who exclaimed, 'What have you got there?' 'A poor fellow I found on the steppes,' was his reply. The questioner going close to the cart to look at the man, cried out, 'Good God! it is my priest!' He happened to be the very sheep I had come to seek. The poor fellow took me into his hut, and with his wife and children did all in his power to bring me back to life. My first anxious inquiry was for my poor servants with the sledge. The villagers had already sent out men to look for them, and found them motionless and unconscious in the same place where I had left them. One of them was already dead, the other died the next day. The boy who served Mass alone survived, but both his hands had to be amputated, being hopelessly frozen."

This is not the only time that Father Gromadski nearly lost his life as a good shepherd. He was sent for one evening to a dying woman who lived about one hundred and fifty versts from Omsk. The message arrived just as he was about to read the burial service over the remains of one of his flock. His friends implored him to defer his journey until the snow had ceased to drift; but he would not listen to any arguments against what he considered his duty. "A dying person cannot wait, a dead one can," was his only answer; and ordering the coffin to be carried into the church, and postponing the funeral till the next day, he started at once on his perilous journey.

"Every one thought me mad," he writes "but I put myself in God's hands and encouraged by the urgency of the call, in which the salvation of a soul was at stake, I set off on my journey. We had three good horses, but the sledge rocked to and fro like a boat on a rough

sea, and we were continually falling into the snow-drifts, while the wind, blowing up clouds of snow in our faces, nearly blinded us. All at once my coachman turned round and said he had lost his way, and did not know what direction to take, adding in a broken-hearted voice: 'I have a wife and child at home whom I shall never see again.' His despair was infectious and my spirits sank, but feeling it was no use giving way, I asked him 'how long his horses could bear such a strain?' 'They are the best horses in Omsk,' he replied, 'and do not know what fatigue is.' 'Do they know the road?' I continued. 'Of course they do,' was his answer, 'for they were bought at the place to which we are going.' 'Have you ever been this way before?' I then asked. 'Yes, very often, but never in such a snow-drift as this. I would not let a dog go out in such weather,' he murmured. I wrapped up the coachman in my fur coat, and drew over myself a mantle made of wool and horse-hair, saying to him: 'Did you ever lose your way before in the steppes?' 'Never,' he replied. 'It has often happened that when the wind was high, I have laid myself down at the bottom of the sledge and the horses brought me safely home. But to-day the wind is too boisterous. It moans as if it were an evil spirit.' 'You believe in God?' I continued. 'Will you not confide in His providence?' 'Yes' replied the poor fellow. 'Then make a good act of contrition and be heartily sorry for your sins, and repeat after me the prayer I am going to say.' He did so, but then said to me: 'What are we to do? If we remain here, we must die.' 'Drive on,' I replied, 'in God's name, and let us trust in Him.' He whipped up his horses, who started at a quick gallop.

"All at once the sound of a bell met our ears, and I felt sure a village must be near. 'It is a bad omen,' he exclaimed. 'They are ringing for our death. Oh, must I die far away from those I love, with the snow for my winding-sheet and no other funeral service but the wailing, moaning wind?' I could scarcely restrain my tears at his words, and then without any apparent reason

the horses all at once came to a dead stop and stood as if turned to stone. The coachman lashed them, but all in vain: they reared themselves on their hind legs and would not stir. Then he flogged them again, and the poor beasts made an effort to spring forward, but their instinct had told them what we did not know, that we were on the edge of a precipice. The coachman shrieked in an agonizing voice: 'We are lost!' I called on Jesus and Mary, and then felt we were falling from an immense height, when I lost consciousness.

"On recovering I found we were simply surrounded by walls of snow and that, humanly speaking, there was no escape for us. I made an effort to get up from the crevasse of snow in which I was lying and went to my poor man, who was sitting, sobbing. 'It is no use trying to get out of this,' he said. 'We must resign ourselves to die. May God have mercy on us!' Then he made the sign of the Cross and lay down as if he were going to bed. I tried to rouse him, and implored him to help me to extricate the sledge and to harness the horses to the broken shafts. He did as I told him, but every minute got more drowsy. I saw that one part of the precipice was lower than the rest and at last induced the horses to scramble up that side, while a violent gust of wind driving away the snow, made a sort of road for us. But the cold became more and more intense. I tried to warm my coachman with my breath, but his only words were: 'Let me die quietly.'

"At last, I began myself to lose hope and recommended my soul to God. Then the words of the Royal Psalmist came to my mind: *In te, Domine, speravi: non confundar in æternum.* The sound of the bells I had heard before now became distinctly audible. I discovered afterwards that it was the custom in those parts to ring the bells during a snow-drift, in order to direct travellers who had lost their way. The sound gave me courage, the horses also seemed to understand that help was near, and at eleven o'clock at night we arrived at the village. To my intense relief, my coachman was still alive, and with care and attention soon recovered.

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"But I was not yet at my journey's end. My dying woman was in another small town, full seven hours further on. However, the wind had gone down, the stars came out, and I felt quite able to continue my travels. I changed horses and the road being now clear, we reached our destination by six in the morning. You can fancy what the relief to my mind was, when I came into the poor cottage and saw the little altar already prepared. There was no time to be lost. I began instantly to vest for Mass, being almost overcome by the thoughts which crowded into my mind, but with a feeling of intense joy that I was not too late. The poor dying woman could not restrain her tears when she saw me, after having been deprived of the consolation of hearing Holy Mass for twelve years. She begged her nurse to carry her to the foot of the altar, saying it was there she wished to give up her soul to God. During the Holy Sacrifice she sobbed and prayed out aloud; but her tears were of joy and gratitude more than of sorrow. My own tears fell thick and fast, feeling what a privilege it was to be able to console so effectually this dying soul. She received Holy Communion with the utmost fervour, and her gratitude and joy more than repaid me for the risk and fatigue I had undergone. I found they were miserably poor, and so left with them all the money I had with me, and then safely returned to Omsk."

But snow and cold are not the only dangers to be met with in Siberia. In another letter to his mother we find the following:

"Having been holding a kind of little mission in the town of Kuzmeck, where there are a good many Catholics employed by the merchants there, I went on to the town of Bijsk. My way lay across the Aksuna Mountains. (*Ak* in Tartar means white: *su*, water.) The scenery is beautiful and like the finest parts of Switzerland. The mountains are very high, and there are magnificent forests of cedar and pine-trees at their base. The road itself is like a splendid avenue in a park, being bordered on both sides by noble trees.

The night was clear and fine. We had passed the river Czoryz and entered a dark part of the forest when we came to the post-cart, which had started a little before us and had come to a standstill. 'What has happened?' I asked my coachman. 'Why don't they go on?' 'The bear will not let them,' he replied. 'Please look!' I put out my head from under the hood of the carriage and saw something big lying in the middle of the road, looking like a heap of dark-coloured hay. 'Is that the bear?' I exclaimed. 'It is,' replied the man. 'Then why shouldn't we drive round it?' 'God forbid!' was his answer. 'She would follow us and tear us to pieces.' 'Will she remain there long, do you think?' I asked. 'Perhaps an hour, perhaps more,' was the reply.

"This was a pleasant prospect. The horses snorted and stood as motionless as if they had been turned into stone. There was nothing to do but to wait patiently till the bear deigned to get up. In about half an hour she raised herself on her hind paws, growled so loudly that the horses trembled, and then disappeared in the forest. As soon as we thought she was at a safe distance we hurried away, from time to time looking back fearfully to see if she was not trotting after us. When we came to the next stage the coachman was as pale as a sheet and could scarcely speak. It appeared it was a she-bear with two cubs, and what is called a foster-cub, that is, a young bear of a year old, which follows its mother and helps her to take care of, and defend, the younger ones. On hearing our approach the little cubs, terribly frightened, climbed up the trees. The mother and foster-cub stayed on the road to terrify any one who dared to approach or try to pass. If we had persisted, she would have thrown herself upon us and tried to tear us to pieces. They are such powerful beasts that sometimes corpses are found with the hands completely torn off and this happened only a few days before, so that I no longer wondered at my coachman's fears. In spite of the delay, the sick man I had started to visit

was still living. He received all the last sacraments with the greatest piety and devotion, and soon after his agony began and I did not leave him till he had resigned his soul into the hands of God."

In another letter he writes:

"In May, 1877, I arrived at Bijsk, and there met one of my parishioners, Dr. Michalowski, one of the Government doctors, who told me he was just starting for a journey across the Altai Mountains as far as the confines of the Empire of China. My own way lay in the same direction, as I was going to visit the Catholics who were working in the Government gold-mines at Rudmilk Zyryanowski; so that I was delighted to have so experienced and agreeable a companion. We started accordingly together in a little cart to the village of Ujmorr, which lies at the foot of the mountains; but there we had to dismiss our carriage and make the rest of the journey on horseback. The roads across the mountains are most fatiguing and dangerous, the paths being so narrow and steep, with deep precipices on either side, so that a false step would be fatal. The feeling of duty alone forced me to overcome my nervousness and keep my head clear. The doctor was fortunately a good horseman and had many times made the same expedition. We travelled about one hundred and fifty versts a day, changing horses at every station; and for resting-places we chose the most sheltered spots under a projecting rock or under a cedar-tree.

"All at once the streams swollen by the thawed snow overflowed their banks and stopped our way. We had passed the Biallek Mountain, close to which the River Kotumek flows which joins the River Bija and forms one of the largest of the Siberian rivers. What was to be done? There was nothing for it but to set to work and make a raft; but when it was finished, we found it was not strong enough to bear our united weight. After a consultation, we decided to leave our horses to swim over, which they are accustomed to do, and very soon we saw them, to our great

relief, safely landing on the opposite bank and eating the fresh grass there. But then came the question of how we were to join them? To lighten the weight, we undressed ourselves, made our clothes into an immense bundle wrapped in a waterproof horsecloth, and got on the raft in our shirts, when we began to row with all our mights. The current carried us down the river, and it was only after very hard work that we arrived at the other side, The moment we sprang on dry ground the man who was holding the rope by accident let it go; and the raft, with one of the men named Fedor, and with all our clothes and provisions slipped away and was carried headlong down the stream. Fedor's companions, with their foreheads touching the ground began to pray for his soul, feeling sure he would be drowned and dashed to pieces on the rocks in the middle of the river. The said stream wound like a serpent and from time to time, at each bend, we caught sight of the poor raft, until at last it disappeared altogether. Then we asked one another in perfect despair, what on earth could we do! What should we have to wear, or to eat? There was not a human habitation near. The only thing was to mount our horses in our shirts and try and push on to our destination. The way was long, the cold great, and there seemed every prospect of our being frozen to death. The one ray of hope was that we might meet some Kalmuks in charge of a herd of horses: so we started off at a gallop up the mountains. After a time, however, I became completely numbed with the cold, my feet continually touched the snow, and I felt every moment as if I should fall frozen from my horse.

"All at once I heard a voice calling out, *Deo gratias!* It was our coachman, who had sighted a Kalmuk encampment. We joyfully echoed his *Deo gratias!* and in a few moments found ourselves in the midst of the Kalmuks, who received us most hospitably, gave us something to eat and sent off to the nearest village to get some clothes for us. Our party had an official character, for the doctor, though only in his shirt, had

kept on his cap with his Government badge. He ordered the chief of the band to send a search-party to see if any tidings could be obtained of the unfortunate Fedor and the missing raft. In the course of a few hours, we saw, to our great delight, the men returning and Fedor with them. It appears that Fedor had not lost heart, but had piloted the raft so skilfully that at one of the bends of the river he had been able to push himself ashore and sprang out with our baggage; so that, thanks to God's good providence, we were once more together, and able to dress ourselves in our own clothes. May His holy Name be praised!"

But Father Gromadski does not limit his zeal to providing for the spiritual wants of his scattered flock. He does everything he can to develop the resources of the country by the cultivation of fruit, the breeding of cattle, and the care of bees. The first was attended with immense difficulties, but he records wonderful successes in the end; apples weighing half a pound, excellent melons, and the like. In this department he was assisted by a M. Wasiewicki, who after many failures, was enchanted to be able to produce also some fine cherries. Father Gromadski went to visit a model farm on his return from Bijsk, kept by another Pole, M. Matkiewicz, who had seconded him warmly in his attempts at civilization among the exiles. He writes: "M. Matkiewicz devotes all his leisure hours to the study of agriculture. He is also a bee-keeper on a large scale, and does all he can to encourage his neighbours to follow his example. He has besides a number of Chinese cows, which are very curious beasts, and differ in many ways from ordinary cows. They have no horns, have tails like horses, and long hair which sweeps the ground. They do not low, but grunt like pigs. About the quality of their milk there is a great diversity of opinion. Some say it is thin and watery, others that it has the consistency of cream; but their flesh has certainly a far stronger flavour than ordinary beef. . . . Another important branch of industry is the breeding of a kind of roebuck, the horns of which are in great

demand, and always command a good price. The Chinese extract from them a purple liquid, which is not only useful for dyeing, but also as medicine. The Chinese are ready to give ten roubles (equal to eighteen or nineteen shillings English money) for every pound weight of these horns, and one of the peasants in the village of Ujmorr made annually between four and five hundred roubles in this way. I did all I could to encourage the breeding of these animals, feeling in this, as in all the other attempts we have made, how necessary it is for the moral state of these poor exiles to give them fresh interests, and prevent their sinking into hopeless despondency. . . . . From Ujmorr I went to visit the villages on the Chinese frontier, where many Catholics live. My road wound along the banks of the Koksy River, and is most picturesque, but one must have good nerves to ride along the edge of the frightful precipices and crevasses on either side, some of which are six miles in length, and I confess that I never made this journey without a thrill of fear. The inhabitants of these mountain districts are better off than most of my flock, but one would not guess it from their way of living. However, they were delighted at my unexpected visit, and rejoiced in the opportunity of going to their duties."

But these holy Siberian priests have not only to contend with dangers from cold and hunger, floods and wild beasts. Their greatest risk is run in the hospitals and prisons, where typhus fever is always raging. Tomsk is a centre from which prisoners are sent to all the different parts of Siberia. Whole bands of condemned men and women arrive there, and are then classified and sent to their respective destinations. The central prison of Tomsk, and the hospital adjoining it, have been described by many writers, and even by the Government officials, as "places not fit for dogs." Prisoners arrive and depart at the rate of one hundred and fifty twice a week, so that the average number of criminals annually passing through Tomsk is nearly thirteen thousand. Each one remains in the central

prison from one to four weeks, a place which is so infected with fetid air that it is almost impossible to avoid catching the fever. Father Gromadski has had it four times, so has Dr. Orzeszko, the devoted doctor. There are three different kinds: the yellow typhus, in which the skin of the patient becomes as hard as wood, and is the colour of saffron; the black typhus, in which the body is covered with black patches, which break out into abscesses, so that the whole person is one sore; and the decaying typhus, when the whole body decays and rots; but all these miseries would be bearable if it were not for want of room. The prison is built to accommodate eight hundred persons; very often two thousand are crammed into it. The hospital has beds and linen for from forty to fifty patients, while it often happens there are four hundred and fifty ill; so that four hundred are compelled to lie huddled together on the floor, at each side of the large ward, a passage being left free in the middle. The poor unfortunate men make a bundle of their clothes, to serve as pillows, and cover themselves with their coats: the little linen they have cannot be called white, for it is black from filth, and very often, on the unwashed stains of putred matter are found masses of living worms.

The Government is perfectly aware of this horrible existing state of things, but takes no steps to remedy it, or to supply increased accomodation. Probably the authorities fear that any money given for the purpose would find its way into the pockets of the officials, a thing which often happens in Russia. A sum of thirty kopecks is given daily to each sick person, which is supposed to be sufficient for all his wants. When Dr. Orzeszko visits the hospital he is obliged to go on his knees to examine his patients. After having visited eight or ten, he gets up from his kneeling position to stretch himself, gets deadly pale, and then faints, overpowered by the horrible stench. The attendants carry him away, and sprinkle him with water, till he recovers consciousness. "Where am I?" is his first question. Then he recollects and adds: "Oh, it's the visit!"

Nevertheless this brave and good man nerves himself to go back again to the fetid ward, and soon the same thing happens. He will often faint three or four times in the course of the morning, and in every case, when, after his daily rounds, he ventures home, he is so pale and exhausted, he can scarcely stand. When a dying man wishes to see the priest it is never refused, but when the poor priest comes he is obliged to lie on the floor to hear his penitent's confession, there being only just enough space between the patients for a man to place himself. The man on the other side is often delirious, and spits and vomits over the priest. At such moments it is only the remembrance of our Lord's humility and His great love for man, which enables one to overcome one's natural repugnance. Holy Communion must often be given direct from the pyx hanging round the priest's neck, and only very rarely can a little temporary altar be arranged at the foot of the bed. A great many of the exiles have their wives and children with them, and it often happens that the parents die, leaving three or four little ones behind them of tender age. Father Gromadski writes: "I am sometimes almost in despair when I think of these poor orphans. For twelve long years I have made constant appeals to the faithful in other lands to help me; but my voice is weak and cannot make itself heard in the distance. It is only with the greatest difficulty that I can keep my school going. . . . The maintenance of an orphanage would require a capital of from six to nine thousand roubles, but if I could only get the money to build one, I feel God would help me to maintain it. I tried the plan of boarding out the orphans in families; but it was a failure. The money (to give which I had deprived myself of necessities) was used by the people for their own purposes, and the poor little children were starved. Such an asylum could also be used for the dying. The law orders that when a man is ill, and has no family to look after him, he should be sent to the nearest town and lodged in the hospital. In order to avoid the expense of transporting him, sometimes some hundred

versts distance, the poor sick man is lodged for a day or a night in different peasants' huts; so he is daily carried from hut to hut till he dies, and in winter they are often moved through forty degrees of frost, which kills them. As a rule these single men are all Poles. I was sent for once to one of them who was dying, and found him laid by the door with a piercing cold wind blowing on him. The warmest corner is never given to these poor fellows, and they often have to suffer blows as well as neglect. Happily on this occasion I had a few roubles with me and thus could persuade the peasant to move him to a more comfortable corner of the hut, and to let him die there in peace. . . . The self-sacrifice and untiring labours of Dr. Orzeszko are beyond all praise. There is no place too poor or too dirty for him to visit in the cause of charity. I have seen him crawling on all fours into some of the hovels, and all he earns he gives to the poor and needy, so that his name is known and blessed throughout Siberia."

We will now turn from the sad subject of the prisons to give another touching extract from one of Father Gromadski's letters regarding a young couple whose happiness he was able to secure.

"In 1876-7 there was a great Nihilist rising in Russia. In general the Poles kept aloof from such conspiracies; but sometimes here and there, those that had been educated in Moscovite schools, allowed themselves to be drawn into the Nihilist ranks. Among these was a young lady, who was arrested and thrown into prison. There she made acquaintance with a Jewish gentleman, who was also implicated in the affair, and they fell in love with each other. His religion, however, was an insuperable barrier, till the Jew made up his mind to become a Christian, having been taught the truths of our holy religion by the fair Nihilist. But now a grave difficulty arose. In Russia no convert can be baptised or received into the Church without the express permission of the Minister of the Interior. The Jew wrote asking for the necessary leave,

but received no answer, and in the meantime his sentence arrived which transported him to East Siberia, near Irknek, while his betrothed was to be sent to Kainsk, a place several thousand kilometres nearer the civilized world. The sentence was immediately carried out and the young couple found themselves together on the road leading to their respective places of exile. The convoy halted some days in Moscow, and the Jew took the opportunity to see a Catholic priest and again sent a petition to the Home Minister, but in vain. Heavier and heavier grew their hearts; the most severe punishment awaited them, and their one hope of being allowed to bear it together seemed fading away. If they were once married the wife would be allowed to follow her husband; but how could this be brought about? So they arrived at Tomsk and came to me. I was very much touched at the Jew's earnestness, and at once telegraphed to the Minister, but without success. The story came at last to the ears of the Governor of Tomsk, an unusually kind and humane man, who also telegraphed to St. Petersburg. Meantime the moment came for the poor Jew's departure, and in the greatest despair he parted from his betrothed. But Almighty God is good, and their faith in Him was rewarded. A few days after the Jew's departure from Tomsk the long-desired permission arrived. But now fresh difficulties arose. The young lady was to be sent to Kamisk, and from thence she might forward a petition to the Government to be taken eastward. But even if granted, the expense of her journey, and that of two policemen to accompany her, would have to be borne by herself; while the Jew would equally be obliged to pay for sending for the Catholic priest, and neither of them had any money! The only solution of the difficulty was for the Governor to give me leave to take the poor girl with me and to start as quickly as possible so as to overtake the Jew on the way, receive him into the Church, and marry them at the first halting-place. It was the worst possible season for such a journey: long nights, rain, cold, and almost impassable

roads. But nothing deterred this poor young lady, for whom there was universal sympathy. The Governor was most kind, gave the desired permission, and, to facilitate our journey, ordered one of his own Cossacks to accompany us, whose special duty was to see to the changing of horses and to prevent unnecessary delay; he also furnished the exiled lady with warm rugs and cushions, as well as the necessary provisions.

"We set off accordingly in spite of the dreadful state of the weather. The strong Cossack, inured as he was to the cold, said to me afterwards that if it had not been for the whiskey he drank he could not have endured the fatigue. My courage almost failed me several times, and all the more as my poor little companion fell ill, and lay motionless and almost lifeless at the bottom of the sledge. At the different changes the Cossack was obliged to carry her from one carriage to another. 'Will our young lady die?' he asked me anxiously every time, and I began to be seriously uneasy at her condition. But every time I asked her if she would stop and rest, she only replied in an almost inaudible voice: 'Oh, no; let us go on!' So on we went, and on the fifth day after our departure from Tomsk we overtook the band of prisoners. The officers in charge were struck with astonishment when they found that the Governor had had the courage to entrust a person politically compromised to a Catholic priest instead of the police; but the Governor's letter was plain and explicit, so that they had no right to refuse what he ordered. The result was most satisfactory: the Jew was baptized and received into the Catholic Church, for I found that he had been thoroughly instructed in the faith. His joy and thankfulness were touching to see. The young lady had been to her duties before leaving Tomsk, which was a great relief to me, for the Nihilists in general are ready to deny their faith and renounce their families for the sake of their fatal political opinions. She now went again to confession, and both she and her betrothed came to Holy Communion; after which I married them. The happy couple were

allowed a few days' rest, and were then hurried on to their place of banishment, ready to endure any amount of hardship or suffering now that it could be borne *together*. The former Nihilist is now an honest, good woman, and both have done their best to redeem their past lives. My journey back to Tomsk was uneventful and I joyfully reported the success of my mission to the Governor. This excellent man, seeing the spiritual wants of the Catholics in that limitless part of the world, petitioned the Government to appoint two extra priests in the Tomsk district, who have been sent to Kainsk and Maryjsk."

The allusion in this letter to the lack of priests makes us pause for one moment to consider under what difficulties a missionary labours in Siberia, and how little communication he can hold with his Bishop. We hear of Vicars Apostolic in the far-off East, and Bishops in all parts of Australia. When shall we hear of the Hierarchy being established in the Siberian portion of God's vineyard? or that at least a coadjutor Bishop is appointed to the Metropolitan at St. Petersburgh, whose jurisdiction extends beyond Kamschatka! The link between him and his priests gets loosened; it is quite impossible to obtain dispensations when they are required, so that many Catholics live and die without the sacraments. There is no one to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, the relations between Bishop and priest becomes more and more strained and difficult—difficult for the faithful, but a hundred times more difficult for the priests, who carry all the burden of responsibility without any advice, help, or support from their chief pastor.

This need was terribly felt by another most holy Siberian priest, Father Szwermicki, who writing on this subject, says: "Siberia is always Siberia, not only from a physical, but also from a moral point of view. A man is exiled there, strong in faith and hope and zealous for God's glory. In spite of himself, by degrees a feeling of coldness creeps into his soul; he begins to feel himself affected by the atmosphere of indifference with

which he is surrounded. He becomes, as it were, petrified; and being shut out from all intercourse with men of his own standing, he becomes more and more reserved. Dreadful as this is for the moral health of an ordinary man, how much worse is it for a missionary priest? He is generally entirely alone; he has no Superior to watch over, console, strengthen, or admonish him. He is answerable to no one for his actions, except to his own conscience. The immense distances and the extreme difficulties of communication in this country put a barrier between him and his Bishop which it is almost impossible for outsiders to realize. Pray much for the labourers in Siberia. What holiness of life is necessary for one whose special mission is to console and strengthen his brethren, when perhaps he is himself so greatly in need of those two things! With what a chaste body and pure soul must he approach the Source of all Purity, to draw the necessary grace to fortify the souls of those wavering in the faith, or wearied by suffering! Do not forget us in your daily prayers, but beg of God to give us true evangelical zeal."

Before concluding this article; we will give one more extract from Father Gromadski's letters, in which he mentions the terrible famine in the winter of 1891. "Business compelled me," he writes, "to go to St. Petersburgh, but I hurried back by Llotoust, Ickaterynburg, and Tiumeni, from which last place I had still fifteen hundred versts to go along a bad sledging road. The sights on the way were most sad, the inhabitants had fled before the famine; in villages where there had been three hundred families, only fifteen or twenty had remained, and hundreds had died. Owing to the scarcity of hay, their horses had been killed for the sake of their skins, so that I had to pay dearly for those I needed for my sledge, and sometimes could not get any fresh ones even for money. Another thing which added to the dreariness of the Tobolsk district was the devastation caused by the locust. They had literally eaten up everything which the sun had not burnt. A ton of hay

which generally cost fifteen to twenty kopecks, was then worth ninety-six roubles. . . . After leaving Ickaterynburgh, I stopped in Talice, where I was hospitably received by M. Paklenski, and in whose house I spent Christmas, much to the joy of the Catholics; as although, from time to time, a priest comes from Permu, no one remembered ever having had the joy of assisting at Holy Mass on Christmas Day. While there, I had an attack of influenza, and was most thankful to have had it in that hospitable house. Had I fallen ill at a poor station I should have died; but surrounded as I was with every care and with nursing, I pulled through.

"The day after New Year's Day I went to Tiemenu, where my arrival was awaited with impatience by the large Catholic population. I was obliged to remain there for more than a week, heard the confessions of more than two hundred persons, baptized many children, and administered the last sacraments to two dying persons. Then I went on to Jarutolow, where I was welcomed and lodged in the house of M. Paklenski's steward, and did the same thing as at Tiemenu. From thence I travelled to Tinkalinsk, where forty or fifty people came to their duties, and many babies were brought to be baptized. Then I went to my old parish of Omsk, where I spent a week, as I had to arrange several matters in connection with the church, and also to revisit my old parishioners, who received me with the greatest kindness. I saw the church which I had built twenty years before, and the trees round it which I had planted with my own hands, and which were now as high as the church. I had also to fulfil the duty of praying for the souls of many of my old flock who had died. From Omsk I returned to Tomsk through Spas and Kanisk, holding services and hearing confessions in every place. The cold was most piercing, and I had to travel day and night through forty degrees of frost. . . . . The pictures of Our Lady of Good Counsel and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour are hung, beautifully framed, on the walls of the Tomsk church. I am going to bless them and hang a small lamp before each, that I

and my people may pray for help and good counsel in all our undertakings and in all the difficulties of our lives. Do you and the good Carmelites help us with your prayers, which we so sorely need. There is so much to be done on all sides, and we lack both spiritual and temporal aid. I receive continually the most urgent calls from every part of this enormous district, and if I could divide myself in pieces I could not attend to them all. The greatest economy is needed to enable us to live, and yet the demands daily increase. . . . . I have begun the Lent services in the church since I came back; we have two sermons daily, one during Mass and the second after Vespers. Lenten hymns are beautifully sung before the Blessed Sacrament, after which we have a procession and Benediction.

"Pray that we may not grow faint and tepid in God's service!"

We have quoted this letter almost in full, forming as it does so eloquent a summary of this good shepherd's labours and duties as a parish priest. These simple heartfelt words need no comment. They speak for themselves, and appeal to the hearts of all Catholics for help in his urgent needs. During his long and weary sojourn in Siberia, Father Gromadski's faith has never grown colder, nor his zeal in the service and love of God and his neighbour, less ardent. The words of the Apostle have indeed been verified in his case: "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils in the wilderness, . . . in labour and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, besides these things which are without, the care of all the churches."*

Who knows what will be the future harvest reaped by him on the Siberian snows: or how many sheaves of those scattered ears of corn have been already gathered by him into God's garner?

* 2 Cor. ix. 26—28.

THE CARTHUSIAN MARTYRS.

By Dom Lawrence Hendriks,
Monk of the same Order.

England has reason to be proud that one of her land was the first martyr of the white-robed children of St. Bruno. This glorious hero, John Houghton, was also the first to witness by his death against the sacrilegious usurpation by Henry VIII. of St. Peter's powers, and St. Peter's prerogatives. He is also the Protomartyr of the pretended Reformation of the sixteenth century, being the first of all who died for conscience' sake, when Henry VIII. robbed England of her ancient faith. He was born in Essex, about the year 1487, of a good family, and was still a boy when he was sent to the University of Cambridge, he was only about twenty years old when, after taking his degree of Bachelor of Laws, he returned home. His parents wanted him to make what would have been a very suitable marriage. He had however already determined to be a priest; and fearful of opposition he left his home without bidding farewell to any one. He was kindly received by a pious ecclesiastic, who allowed John to stay in his house, and who helped him to prepare for Holy Orders. When he was ordained priest, John Houghton returned home. His action was readily forgiven, and he remained with his parents for four years. There he exercised with great devotion the sacred functions of the priesthood, and edified all who knew him by his holiness.

The life of a secular priest in the midst of the family circle could not, however, satisfy the cravings of John Houghton's fervent soul. He sought a state of closer union with God, and of more complete detachment from created things, than was practicable there. He had recourse to prayer, and obtained the inestimable blessing of a call to the Carthusian Order. He presented himself as a postulant at the London Charterhouse,* and after a long period of trial he received the white habit

* All Carthusian Monasteries in England bore the name of Charterhouse. The word is a corruption of *Chartreuse*, the name of the wild mountain solitude in which St. Bruno founded the Order in the eleventh century.

of St. Bruno from the hands of Prior Tynbygh. One year later, probably in 1516, John Houghton made his profession of solemn vows. He was then twenty-nine years old.

For more than seven years he dwelt peacefully in his cell as a simple monk; and by the generous observance of the Rule, a sure method of acquiring a sublime degree of perfection, and under the guidance of the saintly Tynbygh, John Houghton became the man of God he afterwards showed himself to be. Space will not allow us to enter into minute details regarding Carthusian life; yet to one who knows nothing of the subject it may be interesting to learn that the "cell" in which John Houghton dwelt was a little cottage, complete in itself, with a small garden and a place for taking exercise. There was the workshop below, and on the first floor the cell proper, furnished with a stall and prie-dieu for saying Office and other devotions, bed, study-table and book-shelves; it served also as a refectory for meals, which are generally taken there in solitude. Here John Houghton spent the greater part of his time in contemplation, and in prayer for himself and for others, in study, and in manual labour. He rose every night to sing God's praises in the choir in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and performed the various acts of devotion and of mortification which are prescribed by the Rule, or were permitted by his Prior. A few lines from Maurice Chauncy, a monk who knew John Houghton very well, will give us a glimpse of his hidden life in the cloister of the London Charterhouse: "There," he says, "he spent twenty years of religious life in great austerity, in perfect humility, with admirable patience, in entire self-abnegation. He was a most exact observer of the rules regarding solitude and silence, striving always to hide himself, and concealing most carefully any special graces with which he was favoured. He dreaded nothing more than to become known, and was ever desirous of being forgotten or deemed unworthy of esteem."

Notwithstanding his efforts to remain hidden and unknown, John Houghton was at length obliged by holy obedience to become an "officer" in the Charterhouse. The duties of Sacristan, which he had to

perform during five years, were not very distasteful to him, for he deemed it a great honour to be ever busy with all that regards the sacred ministry of the altar. He also found in this office many an opportunity of rendering little services to his brethren, and of humbling himself before them. As Sacristan, moreover, he was able to satisfy his tender devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, part of his duty being to recite in the church all the Offices which the other monks said in their cells. His various duties did not bring him in contact with the outside world, for even the church, excepting the visitors' gallery, which was only for men, was quite private. Week after week he took his walk with his brethren, but he had never entered the city of London since he had become a Carthusian. Though the Charterhouse was only just outside the walls, the monks always directed their steps towards the country. When however, as it fell out, John was appointed Procurator of the monastery, he had to appear in public and to lead a life of comparative distraction; and it will easily be understood that the saintly monk accepted that office with a heavy heart. He regretted the peaceful solitude he was leaving. He feared the dangers to which the performance of his new duties would expose him. But his virtue was more solid than his humility would allow him to suppose; and as Procurator he became more useful to his neighbour, without injury to his personal holiness. In the streets of London, as in the silent cloister, he knew how to commune with God; and so well did he combine the contemplative life with the active, that he performed well all the duties of his office without ever forgetting the one thing necessary.

Father John Houghton had been Procurator about three years when he was appointed Prior of the Charterhouse of Beauvale in Nottinghamshire. He bade farewell to his brethren, and went where obedience called him, little thinking that he would soon return to London, there to receive new dignities, and to undergo terrible trials and sufferings, and gain the palm of martyrdom.

Father Batmanson, who a few years before had succeeded the saintly Tynbygh as Prior of the London Charterhouse, died in November, 1531, and Father

Houghton was elected to replace him by his former companions. Thus only six month had elapsed since his departure for Beauvale, and he was back once more to govern the House in which he had made his vows In the following spring, the General Chapter of the Order, held at the Grande Chartreuse, named him Visitor of the English Province. So in spite of all his efforts to live hidden and unknown in his cloister cell, John Houghton found himself at the head of the Carthusians in England. In this position his virtues shone forth in all their beauty, especially his deep humility. Honours in no way elated him. On the contrary, in the marks of respect and submission prescribed by the Rule or by the customs of the Order, he found an occasion of confusion. He did not refuse these honours: he knew his duty too well for that. But he used, as he told the monks, to pray God to receive them to the glory of His holy Name. He took the same care as when he was a simple monk to conceal all that was extraordinary in his gifts and virtues. There was one gift, however, which he could not hide. At the holy altar, or while assisting at the conventual Mass, sweet tears of love and compunction would often be seen trickling down his cheeks. Sometimes even in the refectory, where the monks dine together on festivals, his heart was so full of the sentiments of Divine love that he was unable to refrain from weeping. Yet there was no feebleness in John Houghton's character. He possessed that firmness which is so necessary in the head of a large community: he even knew how to be severe when he deemed it his duty.

His zeal with regard to the proper performance of the Divine Office was most remarkable. He also showed a great love for the spirit of holy poverty; and in this and in other respects he not only maintained the discipline of the Charterhouse up to the level at which Priors Tynbygh and Batmanson had left it, but even raised it still higher. Documents preserved among the State Papers in London, as well as the writings of the monk Dom Maurice Chauncy, show that when the storm of persecution broke on the London Charterhouse it was in all respects a model monastery. It must not, however, be supposed that John Houghton reformed the Charterhouse. Had

he not found it in good condition, his short period of office of three years and a half, and that in such times, could have done but little. A great deal is due to the valiant Irishman Dom William Tynbygh, who was Prior for twenty-nine years, and who had given the habit to John Houghton and to most of his monks, and had schooled them in religious and monastic perfection. It may be said that the pious and wise Tynbygh had planted; the learned Batmanson had watered; and God gave the increase in the glorious martyrs of the Charterhouse, who were armed for the combat with the breastplate of prudence, the shield of piety, and the sword of learning. Had all the clergy, secular and regular, been like the Carthusians of London on the eve of the Reformation, King Henry VIII.'s work of destruction never could have been carried out, and England would have retained her ancient faith; for even so bold a tyrant as Henry, would not have dared to put so many to death.

The various religious houses were far from being in the state of relaxation which history, written with a purpose, has endeavoured to make us believe. Most of the horrors so often repeated, and received as authentic, even by some Catholics, are now known to be untrue; and for this we are indebted, in a great measure, to the labours of Father Gasquet, O.S.B. Yet it is only too true that many of the inmates of the religious houses of England fell sadly short of what God requires of those who profess to have renounced the world, and who are bound by solemn vows to tend towards perfection; and that many even of the bishops and priests had grown cold and careless in the service of God, and were setting their hearts on earthly things. And when the clergy are found wanting, great things cannot be expected of the laity. A severe trial of faith and constancy was coming, and the devil was everywhere at work preparing for a signal victory—the separation of a great nation from the unity of the Catholic Church.

Such then was the condition of the London Charterhouse, and such very briefly was the state of affairs, when, at the beginning of 1533, King Henry VIII. resolved to rebel against the authority of the Holy See. He had set his heart upon Anne Boleyn's being his

wedded wife, and he saw clearly that the Pope would never grant the divorce he required from his lawful bride Queen Catharine of Arragon. The cause had now been pending at Rome for no less than five years, and had his Holiness seen his way to decide it according to Henry's wishes, there could have been no reason for so long a delay. So, in a word, Henry made up his mind to act without the Pope. Accordingly, he was privately married to Anne Boleyn. Dr. Roland Lee, afterwards made by Henry Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, performed the sacrilegious ceremony. Soon after, Cranmer, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, pronounced the marriage between King Henry and Catharine of Arragon null and invalid from the very beginning, and declared that Henry and Anne had been joined together in lawful wedlock. For the purpose of preventing all discussion and criticism of this unhallowed union and the legitimacy of its issue, an Act of Parliament was passed, under which anything of the kind would be very severely punished. The Act declared that a person speaking against the marriage, or seeking to cast a doubt on its validity, whether in words, writing, print, or deed, should be guilty either of treason or misprision of treason, as the case might be; and that all persons above sixteen years of age should be bound, when called upon, to take the oath of obedience to the statute, under the penalty of misprision of treason.

This Act of Parliament brought the Carthusians into trouble. The position of their monastery, just under the walls of London, the very good reputation they enjoyed, and the custom of the citizens to resort to them for spiritual advice and to assist at the Divine Office, all made it expedient that the monks should either be forced to aid the king in his rebellion against God and the Holy See, or else should be made examples of the royal anger. Accordingly the Commissioners, Roland Lee, and Thomas Bedyll, Archdeacon of Cornwall, paid a visit to the Charterhouse in the April of 1534. They called upon the Prior to give his formal approval to the King's new marriage, and to acknowledge the rights of its issue. John Houghton answered that to meddle with the King's business did

not belong to his vocation, nor to that of his monks, and that it did not concern them whom the King might wish to divorce or to marry, provided they were not asked to give their opinion. The Commissioners were dissatisfied with this reply. They ordered the community to be assembled, and bade the Prior to swear solemnly and without dissimulation that he and all present considered the King's marriage with Catharine of Arragon to have been null, and the union with Anne Boleyn valid and lawful. Fealty to the future children of the new Queen was also to be sworn. The Prior said that he could not understand how the former marriage, solemnized according to the rites of the Church, and so long unquestioned, could now have become unlawful. This observation, made in the presence of the community, was deemed a serious offence; and Prior Houghton and his Procurator, now known to us as Blessed Humphrey Middlemore, were committed to the Tower. They remained in prison for a month; but then, acting on the advice of some distinguished and learned friends who told them that the succession to the crown was not a question for which one ought to die, they took the oath with the reservation —"as far as the law of God permits." They were released and returned to the Charterhouse.

The joy of the monks at seeing their holy Prior once more in their midst was moderated by the fear that a similar concession would soon be demanded of them, and they doubted whether they ought to make it. They were determined, on the one hand, not to compromise their consciences, while, on the other, they trembled at the thought of the consequences of resisting the royal will. They looked to their Prior for advice and guidance, and were ready, should he order it, to refuse the oath whatever might be the consequences. "Our hour has not yet come, dear brothers," replied Father Houghton to the inquiries of his monks. "The very night that Father Procurator and I were set free from prison, I dreamt that I was not to escape so soon, but within a year I should be brought back to that prison, and that then I should complete my course. So, though I have not much confidence in dreams, I think that something else will soon be proposed to us. Meanwhile let us

continue to live together as long as we can do so without offending God by any unlawful concession."

A few days elapsed, and the Commissioners came to demand the oaths of the community. Six of the professed monks of the Charterhouse, including the Prior and the Procurator who had already consented in the Tower, took the oath. The remainder were not yet persuaded that a concession so injurious to Queen Catharine and her daughter was lawful and expedient. Moreover, if the form of oath drawn up two months before was really proposed to them, which is not quite certain, it contained, to say the least, a suggestion of rebellion against the authority of the Holy See. So Lee and Bedyll were obliged to retire without having fully gained their end. This was the second time the Commissioners had met with resistance at the Charterhouse; and it was decided that if they should again be baffled, all the delinquents should be cast into prison. Accordingly Lee returned a week later, accompanied this time by Sir Thomas Kitson, the sheriff; and with him a number of constables, ready to arrest the monks should they prove contumacious. The monks, seeing that their holy Prior was convinced that they ought not to resist unto blood until a clear denial of the Catholic faith was demanded of them, determined to take the oath under the condition, *as far as it was lawful*. The community now rejoiced in the hope of having satisfied the King, and of being able to continue to serve God in peace and retirement. But they were mistaken. The Prior's dream in his prison cell was to be realized, and all were to choose between martyrdom and offence against their God.

Henry VIII. had at length fallen into open and flagrant heresy, and determined to sever his kingdom from Catholic unity by declaring himself sole head of the Church of England. When Parliament met in November, 1534, the saving clause, *quantum per Dei legem licet*, inserted by the Convocations of Canterbury and York in their acknowledgment of the royal supremacy, was swept away; and it was declared, without any condition, that the King, his heirs and successors, should be taken and reputed the only supreme heads on earth of the Church of England, with

full power to visit, reform, and correct all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority ought to be reformed or corrected. It was, moreover, made treason to wish or will maliciously by word or writing, or to attempt by craft, any bodily harm to the King or Queen or their heirs, or to deprive any of them of the dignity, style, and name of their royal estates, or slanderously and maliciously to publish or pronounce, by words or writing, that the King was a heretic, schismatic, tyrant, or infidel. Thus it became high treason to deny the King's title of head of the Church of England, and consequently any one who dared to publicly profess the Catholic religion was in danger of being put to death.

These new laws came into force on the 1st of February, 1535; and Prior John Houghton, who knew he would soon have to give his opinion, consulted Father Fewterer, the Confessor-General of the Bridgettine convent of Syon on the Thames. Fewterer encouraged him in his resolution to die rather than deny the Catholic faith by accepting the spiritual supremacy of the King. On his return to the Charterhouse, the Prior called the monks together in the chapter house, and told them that very probably every one of them would be called upon to renounce his religion, or else to suffer a cruel and ignominious death.

The news struck terror into the hearts of the monks. Then the holy Prior addressed them to the following effect:—"I am very sad indeed, and my heart is heavy, chiefly on account of our younger brethren, of whom there are so many in this monastery. You see, brethren, what pious and innocent lives these young monks lead in our midst. But their virtue has never been tried by any unusual temptation; and it is to be feared that, being cast out upon the world, they will be ruined by its bad example; for 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' and 'he that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it.' Then there may be others amongst us, whose virtue is not solid enough to bear the dangers of the world. And what shall I say, dear brethren, and what shall I do, if I lose any of those whom God has intrusted to my care?" Several of the monks shed tears, and all protested that they were ready

to die for the faith. "Would to God that it might be so!" said the Prior, "and that thus one common death might render to us eternal life, as one common life has rendered us dead to the world. But I do not think our persecutors will do us so great a kindness, nor themselves so great an injury. It seems more probable that, several of you belonging to distinguished families, they will slay me and some of the senior monks, and let the young men go free to return to the world which they had renounced. If therefore it depends on me alone, I will consent to the King's will, provided it be lawful, or else die in order to preserve my brethren from the many and great dangers to which they will be exposed. But if an unconditional consent of the whole community should be required and my death will not suffice, God's will be done. O that all may have courage for the sacrifice!" Here the Prior's voice faltered, and he became exceedingly troubled, probably because he foresaw that some of the monks would not prove equal to the trial, and be found ready to lay down their lives for the faith. However, he soon recovered something of his wonted calm, and said that all should prepare for death by a solemn *triduum*, or three days' prayer. On the first day he desired that all would make a general confession, and, in order to facilitate this, he granted faculties to every priest in the house. The second day, he told them, would be the day of mutual reconciliation. And on the last day, he added, a votive Mass of the Holy Ghost would be sung to obtain grace to do and to suffer whatever might be required of them.

The scene in the chapter house on the second day was a very touching one. After a long and appropriate sermon, in which he dwelt particularly on charity, patience under trial, and fidelity to God even unto death, Prior Houghton said, "Dear Fathers and Brothers, I beg you to do as I do." Then, rising from his seat, he knelt down before each monk separately, from the senior who sat at his side to the last of the lay brothers, craving forgivness of anything whereby he might have offended or pained him. All present followed the example set by their holy Prior, each imploring pardon from every one of his brethren. Chauncy was there; and he tells us that many shed tears, but no

one was so sad as the Prior. He was like Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. It was not, we may rest assured, the fear of being called upon to die for our holy faith that wrung his heart, but the thought of what was coming upon his monastery, his Order, and his country, and above all the presentiment of the defection of some of the monks committed to his care.

On the last day of the triduum, the Prior sang the Mass of the Holy Ghost, and during that Mass God granted to his faithful servants a special grace to aid and strengthen them in the troubles that were coming upon them. After the Elevation of the Sacred Host, there came a soft whisper of air, which some perceived with their bodily senses, while all experienced its sweet influence upon their hearts. Father Houghton was so overcome by this singular manifestation of God's presence in their midst that for some time he was unable to continue the Mass. It appears that the lay brothers did not assist at this Mass; but some of them who happened to be in the chapels near the choir were also partakers in this signal favour. The Prior alluded to this grace at their next meeting in the chapter house, and he told the monks to redouble their fervour in the service of God, to persevere in prayer, in humility, and in filial fear of offending God even by the smallest faults. Nor were his exhortations in vain. Every night after Matins the monks would prostrate themselves before our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament, and pray for the preservation of their monastery and the safety of their beloved Prior. John Houghton, in his sweet humility, attributed all their troubles to his own shortcomings, saying with the royal Prophet: "It is I; I am he that have sinned, I have done wickedly; these that are the sheep, what have they done? Let Thy hand, I beseech Thee, be turned against me."

While the Carthusians of London were thus preparing themselves for the worst, two Priors from other houses of the English Province came to the Charterhouse to consult their Father Visitor and to console him in those troublous times. So they thought; but in reality they came because God vouchsafed to count them worthy to mingle their blood with that of Blessed

John Houghton on the day on which the crimson line was drawn, which separates the ancient faith of England, held by Bede and Cuthbert, Edmund and Thomas, and thousands more, from that by law established by a servile Parliament at the bidding of Henry VIII. One of these two Priors was Robert Lawrence, a professed monk of London, formed to religious life in the school of William Tynbygh, and John Houghton's successor in the Priorate at Beauvale; the other was Augustine Webster, Prior of the Charterhouse in Axholme, and professed monk of Sheen in Surrey.

These two guests soon learnt that the danger which threatened the London Charterhouse was daily becoming more imminent, for the King, on being told of the intended refusal of the monks to accept his new laws, had become furious. They therefore agreed, in company with Father Houghton, to wait upon Thomas Cromwell, the King's chief secretary, a step which the London Prior thought desirable.

The three Priors were received but roughly. They saw from the beginning of the interview that Cromwell was prejudiced against them. John Houghton however begged leave to ask three questions of Cromwell, of Latimer, and of another doctor, who happened to be with him. The first query was, that as our Lord gave power to men upon earth by the words, "And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven," nor did any Doctor of the Church ever understand this to be addressed to any other than to St. Peter, then the Apostles, and through them to the Popes and Bishops,—how could the King, a layman, be head of the Church of England? Cromwell replied, "You would make the King a priest then?" and bade him speak no further. The two other questions, through Cromwell's impatience, were never asked. The one that had been asked was deemed sufficient for a charge of treason; and, without any further evidence, the three Priors were taken off to the Tower. It will be noticed that Priors Lawrence and Webster had not said a word; so that even supposing John Houghton's question to be treasonable, there was no evidence whatever against them. Yet they were kept in confinement, suffering all the hardships which prison meant in those days, from the 30th of March until the 20th of April. This was strange justice.

At last Cromwell thought to remedy this irregularity regarding their detention, not by setting them free, but by making out a charge against them. Accordingly they were summoned to the "Rolls" to undergo an interrogatory. The document, which is still in the Public Record Office in London, runs thus:—

"Interrogatory ministered by the right honourable Mr. Thomas Cromwell, chief secretary of the King's highness, unto Robert Lawrence, Prior of Beauvale, and Augustine Webster, Prior of Hexham [Axholme], and to either of them, with their answers to the same. Whether they or either of them would be content obediently to obey the King's highness as supreme head on earth under Christ of the Church of England, called *Anglicana Ecclesia*, and him so to repute, take, and accept; and to refuse all other potentate and powers, God's only power except, according to the statute in that behalf made. Robert Lawrence, Prior of Beauvale, answered to the said question, that he could not consent nor believe that the King's highness is supreme head of the Church of England according to the statute in that behalf made. Augustine Webster, Prior of Hexham, answered likewise to the said question, that he could not consent nor believe that the King's highness is supreme head of the Church of England according to the statute in that behalf made." The deed is attested by John ApRice, the notary, in the presence of Cromwell, Bedyll, and several others.

The two Priors, having thus refused to renounce their religion, were remanded to the Tower, where they were joined by Blessed Richard Reynolds, of the Order of St. Bridget. A few days later, Cromwell and the Royal Commissioners visited the prisoners. They brought with them a copy of the Act of Parliament under which it was intended to condemn them if they should refuse to take the oath of supremacy. The Fathers said they were ready to consent to all that the law of God permitted, and as far as it permitted. "I admit no exception," said Cromwell. "Whether the law of God permit it or no, you shall take the oath without any reserve whatsoever, and shall observe it too." The prisoners objected that the Catholic Church had always taught the contrary to what was set forth in the Act of

Parliament. "I don't care about the Church," was Cromwell's reply; "will you submit to the law or not?" The prisoners answered that the fear of God would not allow them to disobey or to abandon the Church, seeing that St. Augustine says that he would not believe even the Gospel if the holy Catholic Church did not teach him to do so. This is the substance of the conversation which took place, as Chauncy gives it in Latin, and the State Papers show that instead of the signature of the prisoners, which would be on the document had they consented, the following endorsements were made:—"John Houghton says he cannot take the King, our sovereign, to be supreme head of the Church of England afore the Apostles of Christ's Church. Robert Lawrence says that there is one Catholic Church and one Divine, of which the Bishop of Rome is the head; therefore he cannot believe that the King is supreme head of the Church. Augustine Webster says that he cannot [take] the King, our sovereign lord, to be supreme head of the Church, but him that is by the docto[rs of] the Church taken head of the Church, that is, the Bishop of Rome."

These declarations, made by the Carthusian Priors in the Tower of London, on the 26th of April, 1535, were deemed sufficient to serve as the ground of a charge of high treason. All the papers regarding the public trial, which took place at Westminster on the 28th and 29th of the same month, are fortunately preserved among the State Papers, and may be seen in the Public Record Office. These papers prove beyond a doubt that the blessed servants of God, Houghton, Lawrence, and Webster were not accused of any other crime than that of refusing to renounce the Catholic faith by ascribing to the King a title and powers which our Divine Lord has given to St. Peter and to his successors in the Apostolic See. We read that "treacherously machinating and desiring to deprive the King of his title as supreme head of the Church of England, [they] did, 26th April, 27 Henry VIII., at the Tower of London, openly declare and say: 'The King, our sovereign lord, is not supreme head on earth of the Church of England.'" Burnet's assertion, in his *History of the Reformation*, that no one suffered for not swearing to the King's

supremacy is therefore utterly false; and he is wrong to accuse "the historians of the popish side" of "calumny" and of "impudent falsehood" when they affirm that many were put to death for that sole reason.

The prisoners pleaded *not guilty*—that is to say not guilty of treason; for, far from denying the refusal to abandon their religion, they asserted again in Westminster Hall that on no account could they be persuaded to do anything contrary to the law of God or the Church. The verdict of the jury being deferred until the following day, the prisoners returned to the Tower.

We read in Chauncy's *Historia*, and in an old manuscript in the British Museum, how the jury were not able to agree to condemn these saintly monks. Yet they knew that on the following morning they would be expected to find a verdict of *guilty*. They spent several hours in consultation, but it appeared impossible for them to pass judgment of death, for there was evidently no malice in the prisoners. Cromwell, fearing that his victims might escape, sent to ascertain what verdict the jury intended to return. They replied that they could not pronounce such holy men worthy of the death of criminals. The messenger soon returned with Cromwell's threat: "If you do not find them guilty, you yourselves shall die the traitor's death." Still the jury held out, and Cromwell seemed on the point of losing his prey. He therefore went in person to intimidate them by cruel threats. This time he was successful, and the jury promised to find the accused guilty of high treason. Mr. Froude does not believe this story, chiefly because "the conduct attributed to Cromwell is inconsistent with his character." There is, however, quite enough in the State Papers to show that Cromwell was not such a gentle and merciful man as Mr. Froude supposes; and he took so much to heart the resistance of the Carthusians that it was often difficult to "get him in a good mood" for any other business. (*Calendar of State Papers, IX.* 950.)

There is no record of any defence made by the three Carthusian Priors. Probably they imitated our Lord by keeping silence. The monks were found guilty of high treason, and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and

quartered, for refusing to forsake the religion in which they had been baptised and brought up, and which their fellow-countrymen had held for almost one thousand years. They returned to the dungeon in the Tower, which they were not destined again to quit until their day of sacrifice and of triumph at Tyburn. Cranmer is not noted for kindliness towards Catholics; yet even he made an attempt to prevent the execution of two of the first martyrs of King Henry's Reformation. He was personally acquainted with Fathers Webster and Reynolds; and he wrote to Cromwell in their behalf. "If," he says, "there is no other offence alleged against them (than that of offending against the late statute), it will much more tend to the conversion of others to convert their consciences by sincere doctrine, and so for them to publish it. If they were sent to me I suppose I could do much in their behalf." The Fathers were spared this fresh temptation, for Cromwell took no heed of the Archbishop's suggestion.

Tuesday, the 4th of May, 1535, was the day fixed for the execution. The streets and roads from the Tower to Tyburn were thronged with people, none of whom dared to show the least sign of sympathy; and between two long rows of wondering faces the martyrs of Jesus were dragged, lying on their backs upon hurdles drawn by horses; and—as an unheard of contempt in a hitherto Catholic country—they still wore their holy habits. Had the monks really been guilty of high treason, they should have been degraded, and then executed in secular clothing. But ecclesiastical law had no more force now that the King of England had become a pope. So onward went the strange procession; and now jolting over the rough stones, now splashing through deep puddles of filthy water, the servants of God made a weary and painful journey to Tyburn, where still more terrible things awaited them.

To Blessed John Houghton God was pleased to grant the signal honour of being the first since pagan times to suffer death in England for being a Catholic. After lovingly embracing the executioner, who craved his pardon, the holy martyr entered the cart which stood beneath the gallows; and there, in the sight of the multitude, he was asked once again whether he would

submit to the King's laws, before it was too late. Nothing daunted, he replied: "I call Almighty God to witness, and I beseech all here present to attest for me on the dreadful day of judgment, that, being about to die in public, I declare that I have refused to comply with the will of his majesty the King, not from obstinacy, malice, or a rebellious spirit, but solely for fear of offending the supreme Majesty of God. Our holy Mother the Church has decreed and enjoined otherwise than the King and the Parliament have decreed. I am therefore bound in conscience, and am ready and willing to suffer every kind of torture rather than deny a doctrine of the Church. Pray for me, and have mercy on my brethren, of whom I have been the unworthy Prior." He then asked for time to say his last prayer, which he took from the 30th Psalm: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded: deliver me in Thy justice. . . . Into Thy hands I commend my spirit; for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth." Blessed John Houghton was now ready to meet death.

A thick rope had been chosen, for fear he might be strangled and expire too quickly. It was placed about his neck. The sheriff gave the signal. The cart was drawn aside; and the gentle monk, who had done good to many, and harm to none, was hanging like a malefactor from the gallows. Then came the worst part of the business, for no mercy was shown, and the hideous sentence was carried out in all its details. The rope was cut, and the body fell heavily on the ground; but John Houghton was not dead. They tore off his holy habit, and laid him on a plank or platform. The executioner inflicted a long and ghastly wound with a sharp knife, dragged out his entrails, and threw them into a fire prepared for the purpose. The poor sufferer was conscious the whole time; and while he was being embowelled he was heard to exclaim: "O most holy Jesus, have mercy upon me in this hour!" When at last the executioner placed his hand upon the heart to wrench it from its place, the blessed martyr spoke again. A German, Anthony Rescius, who afterwards became auxiliary Bishop of Würzburg, was close by. He overheard his last words: "Good Jesu! what will ye do

with my heart?" The struggle was over at last. John Houghton had been faithful unto death, and gained the crown of life.

The executions of the blessed servants of God, Augustine Webster, Robert Lawrence, Richard Reynolds, and of a secular priest named John Hale, followed that of Blessed John Houghton. Each as he entered the cart was offered a free pardon if he would renounce his religion; each preferred death to apostasy, and each was butchered in the same way as the Protomartyr. May they obtain, by their blood and by their intercession, the speedy return of their country to the faith for which they died!

The mangled bodies of the martyrs were beheaded, and divided in four parts, which were thrown into a chaldron to be parboiled, before being placed on London Bridge and at the various gates of the city. It appears that some subdividing took place, though the law did not provide for this, for it seems certain that an arm, and not a quarter, of Blessed John Houghton was placed over the entrance gate of the Charterhouse, in the hope that the remembrance of their Prior's fate would induce the other monks to yield.

The office of Prior of the Charterhouse was vacant, and according to the Rule of the Order the monks ought to have proceeded to an election. This, however, was impossible, for the monastery was closely watched, and it had been resolved to bring the monks to acknowledge the King's new title of head of the Church, or else to make them feel the full rigour of his cruel laws. Yet the daily round of prayer and praise went on as before. At the dead of night, in early morn, and at intervals throughout the day, the great bell still rang out for Office, for *Angelus*, for Holy Mass; and the community, save very few exceptions, were as fervent and resolute as ever. Humphrey Middlemore, the former Procurator, was now in charge as Vicar, and was aided by William Exmew, the new Procurator, who shortly before had been Vicar, and confessor of the martyred Prior. Sebastian Newdigate, a former favourite courtier of Henry VIII., now a fervent monk in the cloister of the Charterhouse, was associated with Middlemore and Exmew in the government of the monastery in those troublous days, and with

them he was destined to lay down his life for the truth. Nor had they long to wait for their trials to recommence. Bedyll visited the Charterhouse on the very day of the Prior's martyrdom; and two days later he wrote to Cromwell. His letter is still in the British Museum. "Please it you to understand," he writes, "that on Tuesday, forthwith upon my departure from you, I repaired to the Charterhouse, and had with me divers books and annotations, both of my own and others, against the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, and also of St. Peter, declaring evidently the equality of the Apostles by the law of God. And after long communication, more than one hour and a half, with the Vicar and Procurator of the house, I left those books and annotations with them. . ." Bedyll goes on to tell how, on the following day, the books and annotations were returned to him by a servant of the Charterhouse, without any explanation. He then sent for the Procurator, and asked him whether he and the Vicar and other senior monks had seen or heard the annotations, or perused the titles of the books. The Procurator answered that the Vicar, he, and Newdigate had spent the time upon them until nine or ten o'clock at night, "and that they saw nothing in them whereby they were moved to alter their opinion." After some further remarks Bedyll concludes as follows:—"Finally, I suppose it to be the will of God, that as their religion (*i.e.* Order) had a simple beginning, so in this realm it shall have a strange end, procured by themselves and by none other. And albeit they pretend holiness in their behalf, surely the ground of their said opinion is hypocrisy, vainglory, confederacy, obstinacy, to the intent they may be seen to the world, or specially to such as have confidence in them, more faithful and more constant than any other. . ."

Bedyll's letter soon produced its effect. Less than three weeks elapsed, and Fathers Middlemore, Exmew, and Newdigate were arrested. After being interrogated at Cromwell's house at Stepney, they were thrown into the Marshalsea, where they suffered most cruel tortures. They were bound in an upright position to posts, their necks, arms, and legs being held fast by iron chains; and orders were given that on no account should they be released even for a moment. It appears from the

writings of Chauncy, and of the antiquaries Camden and Stow, that they remained in this position from thirteen to fifteen days. The courage of Blessed Sebastian Newdigate was put to the test in a very special way. The King, who had been very fond of him, went in disguise to the prison, in order to persuade him to purchase his liberty and worldly prosperity by acknowledging the royal supremacy. Sebastian had been in chains for several days and had become extremely weak through suffering, but his holy soul had lost nothing to its former vigour. He answered the King very respectfully, thanking him for his kindness, and promising always to pray for him, but absolutely refused to take the oath. Some days later, when the prisoners had been removed from the Marshalsea to the Tower, the King, who happened to be there, renewed his assault upon the constancy of Sebastian. "Do you," he asked, "think yourself wiser and holier than all the clergy and laity of the kingdom, who have subscribed to my laws? For God's sake, give up this foolhardiness before it brings you to an untimely end. Take a lesson from the fate of those three Carthusians who suffered as traitors only the other day; for you may be sure that if you choose to imitate them in life, you shall shortly imitate them also in death." Sebastian Newdigate stood firm. He was ready to follow his Prior to Tyburn, and was ripe to join him in heavenly glory.

On Friday, the 11th of June, the three monks were brought to trial at Westminster. They had the honour of being included in the same indictment as Blessed Cardinal Fisher, though the prelate's trial was postponed for another week ". . . . that John Fisher," we read in the official documents, "did. . . openly declare in England: 'The King our sovereign lord is not supreme head on earth of the Church of England.' Also that Humphrey Middlemore, William Exmew, and Sebastian Newdigate, late monks of the Charterhouse, London, under the obedience of John Houghton, Prior, now deceased, did at Stepney, in the county of Middlesex, 25th May, 27 Henry VIII., each of them say to several of the King's true subjects: 'I cannot nor will consent to be obedient to the King's highness as a true, lawful, and obedient subject, to take and repute him to be the

supreme head on earth of the Church of England under Christ.'"

The three Carthusians were brought to the bar by Sir Edward Walsingham, deputy of Sir William Kingston, the constable of the Tower. They pleaded *not guilty* of high treason. Chauncy tells how they argued with the judges, showing by many texts from Holy Scripture that our Lord, having conferred the supreme Pontificate upon St. Peter and his successors, the King could have no right to be called head of the Church. But a Protestant author shall pronounce their panegyric. "These men," says Hall in his *Chronicle*, "when they were arraigned at Westminster, behaved themselves very stiffly and stubbornly; for, having heard their indictment read, how traitorously they had spoken against the King's majesty, his crown and dignity, they neither blushed nor bashed at it, but very foolishly and hypocritically acknowledged their treason, which maliciously they avouched, having no learning for their defence; but rather, being asked divers questions, they used a malicious silence, thinking as by their examinations afterward in the Tower of London it did appear, for so they said, that they thought those men, which was the lord Cromwell and other, that there sat upon them in judgment, to be heretics and not of the Church of God, and therefore not worthy to be either answered or spoken unto. And therefore, as they deserved, they received as you have heard before,"—that is, "were hanged, drawen, and quartred at Tyborne, and their quarters set up about London, for denying the Kyng to be supreme head of the Churche." From these words of one who was bitterly hostile to the Catholic religion and to all liberty of conscience, it may be gathered that the blessed servants of God were not ashamed of having refused to acknowledge the King's spiritual supremacy; and after nobly confessing and defending their faith, kept silence, lest, to use our Divine Lord's expression, they should be casting their pearls before swine.

The execution of these brave martyrs, William, Humphrey, and Sebastian, took place on the 19th of June. They were drawn to Tyburn, and there hanged, cut down alive, mutilated, ripped up, embowelled, beheaded, and quartered in the same brutal manner

in which their Prior had been butchered a few weeks before.

No more monks were, for the present, put to death; nobody was even cast into prison, but all were obliged to undergo a kind of slow persecution, in some respects more trying and more dangerous than the violent one which had gained the palm for their brethren. An apparently willing submission on the part of the community would have been a great victory for the King's men, and to bring this about every means was tried with the monks. Seculars were put in charge of the house; and as time went on their cruelty augmented, until at last the life of the monks became a burden almost too heavy to be borne. Yet, by God's grace, they bore it well.

A certain John Whalley seems to have been the first resident Commissioner, and evidently his chief business was the conversion of the monks to the new religion, by persuasion, privation, and threat. He tells Cromwell, in a letter, that the monks are "exceedingly superstitious, ceremonious, and pharisaical, and wonderfully addict to their old *mumpsimus*. Nevertheless," he adds, "better and more charitable it were to convert them, than to put them to the extremity of the law." He had already observed that the visits of a certain preacher, named Rastall, were of no use, because the monks laughed at all he said; he now suggests a plan to convert them. Cromwell is first to send some honest, learned, and loyal men to stay with the monks, and then let the Vicar of Croydon and some others who are known to have been Catholics preach to them "against their superstitious and pharisaical ceremonies, and the Pope's usurped power. And after all this to cause the Bishops of York, Winchester, Durham, Lincoln, Bath, and London, yea and divers other Bishops that be near at hand, in like manner to preach, for they have great consideration and trust in them, insomuch that some of them heretofore have said to me that these foresaid Bishops and divers others will not say nor yet think but for fear, that the King's grace should, or in any wise may, be supreme head of the Church of England." If all this should prove a failure, Whalley thinks the monks ought to be called before the whole nobility, temporal and spiritual, and sentenced according to law.

Whalley made himself quite at home in the Charterhouse. He gave orders that no one should enter the cloister, unless he brought with him Cromwell's token, or was known "to be of an honest sort." He made Cromwell a cheap present of some apples belonging to the monks. "If they like you," he says, "they shall be kept for you as long as they last, and [I will] provide for the convent almonds and figs accordingly." Whalley was soon joined by Jasper Fyloll; and these two appear to have been the seculars mentioned in Chauncy's history. "They pampered themselves," he says, "while the monks were allowed to suffer hunger and thirst. Taking away all substantial food, they portioned out to them a little cheese, or some such thing, as their daily pittance. Moreover, they brought into the monastery a number of wicked persons, who insulted and even struck us whenever they could get a chance. Others were appointed to watch us. We had, however, courage to fight, with Holy Scripture and sound reason for our arms, against the wicked King."

The seizure of the books was a well-aimed blow. The persecutors began by taking away "The Statutes of [St.] Bruno and such like doctors;" afterwards they deprived the monks of nearly all. But Chauncy tells us that when the religious were unable to study, they still found in prayer and meditation an inexhaustible source of wisdom; and though some of the community confounded their persecutors by learned arguments, a greater number fought still more successfully with holy innocence and simplicity for their arms. The constant visits of preachers, of Cromwell, and of Bedyll, were also very trying to the monks. Sometimes they would keep them so long in the chapter-house that Vespers and even Matins had to be postponed. The British Museum and the Record Office are rich in interesting papers regarding the Charterhouse at this time.

We learn from a letter of Fyloll's, that Blessed John Rochester was sent to Cranmer at the beginning of August, 1535, to undergo the process of conversion. The Archbishop could do nothing with him, and sent him back as staunch a Papist as ever. Rochester seems to have been considered the president of the community; and though there was no superior, and, as Chauncy

says, "each man's conscience was his Prior," still every effort was made to win him over to the King's side. "John Maidwell has been here," says Fyloll, "with Dom John Rochester, and had exhorted him to the best, but they could find no good towardness in him; but after an hour's communication they left him as they found him. Then I entreated Rochester and four or five of the monks to be contented to hear him preach one sermon among them, one day that week, wherewith they were then contented. But on the next day, when they had spoken to their other Brothers, they sent me word that I should not bring him among them, for if I did so they would not hear him, because they heard it tell of him that he preached against the honouring of images and of saints, and that he was a blasphemer of saints." . .

In April, 1536, William Trafford, a monk who, one year before, had boldly refused to renounce the faith, but who had since been persuaded to pass over to the King's side, was sent from Sheen to London to be the Prior there by royal appointment. His work was to coerce the religious into error, and bring about the surrender of the Charterhouse to the crown. In order to facilitate this work, it was thought expedient to send four monks, who seemed to be the chiefs of the opposition, to other houses of the Order, and to introduce others who had already yielded up their consciences. Two of those who thus left the London Charterhouse in May, 1536, were Blessed John Rochester and Blessed James Walworth, professed monks of London, and both of them in priest's orders.

We must follow them to the Charterhouse of Hull. Their sorrow must have been very keen when they found that, a few months before, the Prior of their new home had fallen into error and persuaded the community to imitate him. Lee, the Archbishop of York, claims the honour of having perverted him. "The Priors of Hull and Mount Grace," he writes to King Henry, "were sore bent rather to die than to yield to your royal style, but I have persuaded both to change their opinions." Soon after the arrival of the two monks from London, the Royal Commissioners visited the Charterhouse of Hull, and gave a favourable report. They do not mention

Rochester and Walworth, and they might possibly have remained unmolested had not Blessed John Rochester, in his zeal for his religion, and for the true welfare of his King and his country, offered to prove to the Duke of Norfolk, and several of the Council, "that the King's highness hath been deluded and deceived by them that have provoked and enticed his grace to take upon himself the authority of supreme head, and confessed his grace to be of right the only supreme head of the Church of England, next and immediately under God, and to have care and charge both of the body and soul." These words are from a letter in Rochester's hand, addressed to the Duke of Norfolk, in March, 1536. From a remark in that letter, it appears that he was deprived of sufficient nourishment as a punishment for his offer; for, while making bold to ask the favour of being admitted to the presence of the King in order to prove to him by Holy Scripture and by reason that his majesty had been deceived, he says: "and in the meantime to be ordered after the diet of my religion, that I may have convenient strength to make answers at such time as your grace shall call for me, for I am most commonly at all times very weak."

The Duke of Norfolk seems to have forwarded Rochester's letter to the Privy Council, who declared the monk a "rank traitor." Soon after, he and his companions were brought to trial before the Duke of Norfolk, who held his court at York. The fact that these two martyrs were tried by Norfolk, who had been sent to the North to quell the rising of the people in defence of their religion and their rights, has led some persons to suppose that they were put to death for having taken part in that "Pilgrimage of Grace." Even without Rochester's letter, only lately discovered, we have ample proof that they died solely for their fidelity to the Catholic faith; for the "true bill" found against them may be seen in the British Museum, and in it we read the cause of their condemnation: "They falsely, traitorously, and maliciously said and affirmed, that the aforesaid lord, the King, was not now supreme head on earth of the Church of England, but that the Bishop of Rome was, and is supreme head on earth of the same." They were found guilty, and condemned to die. The

execution took place at York, on the 11th of May, 1537, two years and one week after the martyrdom of Blessed John Houghton. Some mercy was shown towards these two martyrs, for instead of being butchered according to the letter of the law, they remained hanging until they were dead, and a long time after they were dead; for chains were used instead of ropes, and the bodies dangled from the gibbets of York until the flesh was consumed, and the bones fell to the ground.

The constant efforts of the Royal Commissioners, the dying declaration of Fewterer, the Confessor General of Sion, who had apostatised, and above all the influence of Trafford, the false Prior, at last began to produce their effect on the monks of the London Charterhouse. They began to be divided as to the question of further resistance. The triumph of tyranny was at hand. On the 18th of May, 1537, thirteen of Father Houghton's monks, making, with Trafford and six others sent from other houses, twenty in all, were found willing to swear to the royal supremacy. Chauncy tells us how they vainly endeavoured to quiet their consciences by a tacit protest against the oath which they took exteriorly. They pleaded as an excuse the straits to which their enemies had brought them. The threatened destruction of the Charterhouse, in case of continued resistance, formed the staple argument in favour of their weak and dishonest action.

These are doubtless extenuating circumstances; those under which Chauncy and Foxe fell later on are still more so; but Chauncy says: "In this we are not justified;" and he is right. They swore to "utterly renounce, refuse, relinquish, and forsake the Bishop of Rome, and his authority, power, and jurisdiction," and to "accept, repute, and take the King's majesty to be the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England." Thus, after resisting so bravely for so long a time, they followed the crowd in that dark hour of England's history, renouncing with their lips and by their signatures the religion to which in their hearts they still adhered. Chauncy and several others, we must observe in passing, repented, and died fervent Carthusians.

This sad story is but a sample of how men, right-minded and true, were forced to give in to the new creed forged by Henry and his cruel satellites.

The form of oath, with the twenty signatures, is followed by another instrument more pleasing to the heart of a Catholic: "Some of the convent, though frequently and earnestly requested and exhorted to take the same oath, contumaciously refused to do so." There were ten of them, and, as they have all received the honours of the Blessed, their names must be given in full. Three were professed cloister-monks and priests, Thomas Johnson, Richard Beer, and Thomas Green or Greenwood; one was a deacon, John Davy by name; and the remaining six were *conversi* or professed lay brothers, Robert Salt, William Greenwood, Thomas Reding, Thomas Scriven, Walter Pierson, and William Horn. Blessed Thomas Green or Greenwood had not been long a Carthusian. Like John Houghton and William Exmew, he was a graduate of the University of Cambridge, and had quite lately taken his degree of Doctor of Divinity. One of his contemporaries calls him "a famous martyr," and indeed it might almost be said of him that he joined the Carthusians when the persecution had already begun, in order to die with them rather than to live with them.

These ten recusants were arrested on the 29th of May, 1537, and cast into Newgate to suffer and to die. In a filthy dungeon, bound fast in iron chains, and kept without food, the martyrs would have been dead within a few days had it not been for the heroic courage of Margaret Clement, an adopted daughter of Blessed Thomas More. She bribed the gaoler in order to obtain access to them, and disguising herself as a milk-maid, she entered the prison with a pail full of food upon her head. "She fed that blessed company," we read, "putting meat into their mouths, they being tied and not able to stir, nor help themselves; which having done, she afterwards took from them their natural filth." At length the King, who, fearing the resentment of the people, wished the monks to die in prison and not by public execution, began to wonder why they were still alive. He ordered a closer guard to be kept over them, and Margaret could no longer persuade the gaoler to allow her to enter the dungeon. She managed, however, by force of bribes to get leave to go up on the roof, and removing some of the tiles she let down a basket of

food by means of a cord. This was dictated by her great desire to help the servants of God in their distress, but their hands and feet being fast chained, they could get but little out of the basket. Soon after, the gaoler, always afraid of being found out and of so losing his head, forbade her to come any more.

The state of the martyrs in Newgate a fortnight after their arrest is shown by a letter from Bedyll to Cromwell preserved in the British Museum. "My very good lord,' he says, "after my most hearty commendations, it shall please your lordship to understand that the monks of the Charterhouse here in London, which were committed to Newgate for their traitorous behaviour long time continued against the King's grace, be almost despatched by the hand of God, as it may appear to you by the bill inclosed. Whereof, considering their behaviour and the whole matter, I am not sorry, but would that all such as love not the King's highness and his worldly honour were in like case. . ." The bill enclosed is still extant. It runs thus:—"There be departed: Brother William Greenwood, Dom John Davy, Brother Robert Salt, Brother Walter Pierson, Dom Thomas Green. There be even at the point of death: Brother Thomas Scriven, Brother Thomas Reding. There be sick: Dom Thomas Johnson, Brother William Horn. One is whole: Dom Beer."

Blessed William Horn, whom Bedyll says was sick, was destined to suffer more than all the others, for when his nine companions had entered into the joy of their Lord, he remained languishing in Newgate. He was afterwards transferred to the Tower, where his treatment must have been somewhat less severe, for three years later he was still alive. On the 4th of August, 1540, he was drawn to Tyburn to die under the knife of the executioner; and his glorious martyrdom closed the list of the eighteen English Carthusians who witnessed to the Supremacy of St. Peter in the terrible days of King Henry's Reformation.